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WEBER Vol II

the life of an artist

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CHAPTER I.

DRESDEN IN 1817.

What natural outward appearance is to an individual the peculiarity of geographical position is to a town; and in this sense the charming capital of Saxony may take its place, as one of the most richly endowed by nature, among European cities. Sufficiently large to escape all the little miseries of a narrow social circle, and yet not so large as to lose the true balance of social relations, Dresden lies in a broad smiling valley, amidst sunny mountain slopes, which are covered with wood and vineyard, pleasant villas, and prosperous villages, and mirrored on the surface of a fine navigable stream. Its life, during the first quarter of the present century, was as tranquil as the stream which bathed it. Its neighbouring villages, which rose with their rich orchards like islands out of the sea of cultivated fields around, offered quiet, modest, airy retreats to those who loved to fly from the dark narrow streets, which the sloping rays of a North-German sun penetrated too scantily. The friendly garden-studded suburbs, which spread out

from the dark city-gates, with their long green alleys, formed, at the same time, a pleasant frame to the gloomier picture within: and thus it was the habit of the good Dresdeners, as it is to the present day, to seek their pleasure out of the city-gates in the bright seductive world beyond. The stream of luxurious travellers, journeying to the great fashionable Bohemian baths, animated the capital, however, during the summer season, and gave its life a character of ever-changeful glitter. They came, they went, they scattered fancy and adventure as they passed. The Saxon capital was thus arrayed in all its gayest colours at the very time when other great cities were deserted and dull.

Dresden formed the boundary-line, as it were, between the philosophical and critical north and the animated life-enjoying south of Germany. Here the tides of the two opposing currents met, stirred up the stuff which formed a people's character, rubbed off its edges and its angles, but left it without any marked form of its own. To this absence of individuality other circumstances contributed. In the earlier part of the present century the city scarcely possessed any trade whatever. Its views were never enlarged, its heart's pulses never stirred by the spirit of enterprise; its energies never roused by the compulsory activity of association. No university infused the fresh blood of youthful intelligence, wisdom or folly as it might be, into the stagnant masses of the population. A well-intentioned patriarchal government, at the head of which was a respected sovereign, had accustomed the people to place blind confidence in all its doings,

and to consider any participation in public life as far beyond its sphere. It was assured, at the same time, that such art, as it was allowed to look upon in a very indifferent academy, an excellent choir, a museum which it never saw, and an Italian opera provided only for the taste of its superiors, fully absolved it from any efforts of its own in any branch of art.

Just as little was the people allowed to be influenced by any doings or workings of its aristocracy, either in private or public life. The Saxon nobility was poor, without any landed property of importance, without any imposing advantages, without collections either of science or art, without libraries. In the latter respect many a poor village curate had the better of it. Instead of endeavouring to reassert the position which it had lost in national existence, under the circumstances of the partition of the country, by raising its own intellectual standard, and cultivating the fine arts, thus following the example of the neighbouring Bohemian nobles, it shut itself up in its own narrow circle, in which it lived, intermarried, vegetated, died. Little as it understood the sense of the word "sociability," it designated itself by the exclusive term "society." It proscribed every active exercise of intellect as "vulgar." It brought up its Fräulein and its Junker to confine their views to their own petty sphere; the truest elements of cultivation for the nobleman, travel, observation, comparison, admixture with other classes, it looked upon with horror. All tendencies towards improvement or novelty were repudiated by it as symptoms of unpa-

triotic feelings. At the same time, spite this carefully cultivated narrowness of ideas, spite its deficiency in any marked advantage, spite its want of manner and morality, the Saxon nobility pretended, as its especial right and privilege, to all the first and most important posts at court, to all distinctions in the government or the army, to all that could help its needs and fill its pockets. Under the patriarchal government of the day every post was dependent on the direct will of the sovereign. From the purple and gold of the throne alone, then, could the nobility, in the position it had assumed, derive any brilliancy.

Thus, at the commencement of the present century, there was neither trade, or industry, or art, or noble example, or public life to stimulate the Dresdeners to any show of energy, or bestow on them any distinctive character.

At the same time, Saxony having been led, by its unhappy wavering policy, to change sides six times during a century between the Catholic South and the Protestant North, unsettled political tendencies had been thereby impressed upon the people, and had left unmistakeable traces upon its nature. This unsteadiness of national feeling had been greatly increased by the assumption of the Polish crown, and all the sacrifices, the mortgages, the sale of provinces and rights, the heavy losses, which had followed in its train. During all this unhappy period the Saxon people had seen the country perpetually lowered and weakened. For generation after generation its sovereigns had had the misfortune to place their con-

fidence in unscrupulous or incapable counsellors, who dealt after their own pleasure, not for the honour of the country. The mistresses of August II. had been succeeded by the unworthy favourites of August III. But the people was told—and it believed—that there was no air to breathe but the breath of majesty; no higher standard of cultivation than to think and act as a courtier; no word of patriotism compatible with loyalty; no other meaning to the expression "fidelity," than that of blind obedience. The people had suffered all the horrors and miseries of war without any subsequent advantage to nation or prince; and the thought that it had fought for a great cause was carefully excluded from its mind. All sense of energy, independence, self-esteem, had been thus trampled out. Under Count Einsiedel's oppressive administration every superiority, every unusual talent, still more every show of genius, were declared to be undesirable and inadmissible in the public service, where mediocrity ruled supreme; where men or names no longer existed, but only official posts and well-worked machines; where no man was inspired by the hope of honour, and disgrace alone was feared. "*Point de zèle*" was the maxim written over office-doors. And thus, whilst public opinion was rendered dumb by a strict censureship, the excitement of speculation was deadened; official posts were frequently bestowed unworthily and illegally, and always ill-remunerated; and a cold breath of lassitude and weakness was consequently breathed over all the residents in the Saxon capital. There remained but one bright

point of interest, to which all eyes and hearts were turned: this was the court. King Friedrich August was respected by his Saxon people—and rightly so. They called him "The Just."

The Saxon court, at the commencement of the century, was not only the *primum mobile*, round which the whole life and thought of the capital moved, but the only mainspring of existence. It was the Alpha and Omega of interest in all classes resident in Dresden; even although a prudent, perhaps over-prudent, economy had taken the place of the once proud magnificence of the Kings of Poland; and simplicity and strict morality were the order of the day. To stand in any relation, however remote, to the court—to bear a title or distinctive appellation, to which the word "court" might be prefixed, was looked upon by all alike, from the lowest to the highest, as the greatest of mortal blessings. Did not all honour, all pecuniary advantage, however humble, flow from "court?". Yet, at the same time, a great difference must be drawn between such court influence in Saxony, and the almost contemporaneous court tyranny in Würtemberg. In the latter country the reckless caprice of a dreaded and detested sovereign ruled despotically alike over nobles and people; in the former, the people had cheerfully placed their rights in the hands of a well-intentioned and benevolent ruler, with the conviction that they would never knowingly be wronged, however that ruler might be sometimes led astray by designing and unworthy counsellors. The court was popular in

Dresden—even more popular than ever, when, after the change of religion in the royal family, it had secluded itself more and more—perhaps on account of the very charm derived from mystery. Whenever it appeared in state, on any public or semi-public occasion, it was sure to awaken the utmost attention and respect. When it passed into the Catholic church across the hanging-bridge, which had been erected for that special purpose, the public lined the passages with feelings of the deepest reverence; it crowded the galleries on the occasion of court banquets, and the spaces left for its enjoyment of the show, at the court balls, and levees, and festivities. No doubt there was a considerable attraction in the curious spectacle of court pomp and attire, belonging to an era antecedent to the French Revolution, to another century, almost to another world.* But still

* A contemporary gives the following description of the appearance and habits of the Saxon court on these occasions: "The whole royal family, with their adherents, presented a picture which belonged to the period of the Seven-Years' War. The gentlemen were all in antiquated uniforms and obsolete court-dresses, with powdered wigs, and long pigtails hanging down their backs; the ladies similarly wore powdered head-dresses—and this in the year 1820! When the court went to church, on Sundays and high holidays, at eleven o'clock, on the first stroke of the hour, the royal procession began its march through the hanging-passage, leading from the palace; at the very moment of the last stroke every person sat down, and the service began. The royal family, with their wretched wrinkled faces, all miserably ugly, looked, behind their glazed gallery, like a row of mummies in glass-cases. Thus, also, on their visits to the theatre, where the representations began at six precisely, a similar procession started on the stroke of the hour; at the moment of the last,

the court was popular in itself. At all events, it was in a position to have shed down from the throne that sun of fostering patronage, under the influence of which art and science blossom, as surely as flowers in the springtide. The means necessary for such an influence did not need to be great; and a high-minded prince might have stood at the summit of a people, gaining name and fame in the civilisation of the world. But so it was not. The treasures of art collected in Dresden were only considered as so much dead wealth. Great artists and great men of science were never attracted to Dresden, never encouraged, seldom employed. Schools of art were null—eminent scholars unknown. Evil indeed were the counsels which turned the well-disposed Saxon sovereign away from treading a path upon which his country, however weakened in its political consideration, might have been the first and highest in the glorious sphere of intellect and art.

Musical taste, such as it was in such a people, had been determined in Dresden by other influences. Upon the change of religion of August the Strong, and the subsequent connexions formed with princely Italian families, a more extensive intercourse naturally took place between Saxony and Italy. Rome, proud of her conquest, was anxious to utilise this intercourse in other than a spiritual sense. An Italian

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the king entered the box. All the audience rose, and only sat down again when all the court was seated. And never was a single departure made from this ceremonial by one second through long years."

colony was founded in Dresden of men of all ranks and kinds. Among them were several, far surpassing the heavier Saxons in knowledge of the world and the ways of advancement, who quietly clutched place, power, and influence. Such men naturally became also the arbiters of taste; and they exercised their supremacy in such matters with a kindly commiseration for any other art than pure Italian. Aught else they declared to be mere "promising barbarism." During all the end of the last century, consequently, a strange mixture of German, Roman, and Sarmatian interests—the two latter greatly predominating—seethed and fermented in this little court in the centre of Germany, and coloured it with the strangest oriental and southern tints. When the Polish crown was lost, and a more economical system took the place of all the luxury of the Augustan courts, the greater part of the swaggering Polish element disappeared; and the field at court was left almost entirely to the less exacting and more easily satisfied Italians, who, with their Machiavelli in their pockets, quietly tilled it, and enjoyed its fruits after their own fashion. Polite, elegant, and supple, and at the same time artful and unscrupulous as they were, they soon persuaded the compliant Germans that Italy was the only sunny land of perfect civilisation; and led them to confound the expression "Italian" with all that was refined, distinguished, and tasteful. All who stood in any relation, however distant, to the court, believed it their duty to show an exclusive devotion to Italian art. In all the fine arts, but more especially

in music, Italian taste was the only one deemed admissible in good society. A choir had been founded upon the Italian model; and Italian opera was the exclusive opera of the court. Italian directors of the court music, Italian composers, Italian singers became the sole arbiters of musical taste. Hasse, it is true, had been summoned to Dresden, in the year 1730, to conduct the Italian opera, under August II., along with his talented wife, the celebrated Faustina. But Hasse, one of the most celebrated composers of his time, was only welcomed under his Italian nickname, "Il caro Sassone;" and, although he established an admirable orchestra, according to the requirements of the day, and produced singers of indisputable talent and celebrity, it was only to the greater glory and supremacy of Italian opera. Imbued, as the public was, with the notion, that royal taste must necessarily be met with equal loyal admiration, it would have considered it ridiculous presumption to imagine that any people could publicly contest the palm, on the great course of musical art, with the Italians.

By the side of the exclusive opera, Italian, French, and even German comedy was certainly admitted to play a very inferior part, and was even encouraged by the court. In the eyes of the public, however, German comedy bore about the same relation to Italian opera, that a good-tempered, chattering, but somewhat vulgar housewife might bear to some noble foreign donna, who had the supreme right to admiration, however wearying and cold her manner might be. A new theatre had been even built about the middle

of the eighteenth century—the same in which, until lately, the "palmy days" of the drama flourished in Dresden—where German performances were given alternately with French and Italian. But appertaining to the theatre were also play-rooms, where privileged gambling took place for the benefit of the state: so that poor German comedy was soon looked upon as a mere subsidiary amusement; and Italian opera remained still as before the only recognised taste of the court, the privileged classes, and, as far as it was supposed capable of taste and admitted to its enjoyment, the public.

A period of decline, however, was to come in the Italian opera, under the economical government of Friedrich August, which the miseries of the wars and the debts of spendthrift courts had rendered necessary. The enormous expenses which had been lavished upon the representations of the Italian opera, as a court entertainment, were restricted. In future it was to be accessible to every man who desired to pay at the door. It was thus opened to criticism; and it took its place like any other public institute of art. The king, moreover, otherwise so serious and grave, had a decided preference for "opera buffa." The "opera seria," partly for this reason, partly on account of the heavy expenses attendant upon its production, fell into comparative discredit. Still, however, Italian opera, as such, was looked upon as the type of all that was distinguished. It was regularly visited by the court. It afforded the place of rendezvous for the aristocratic world.

For nearly five-and-twenty years the direction of the theatre had been in the hands of the brothers Seconda, who, as has been already mentioned, likewise conducted the affairs of the theatre of Leipsic, and wandered between the two towns with their troop, the chamber-singers of the court of course excepted. But the Russian authorities, during the period of Russian occupation towards the end of the year 1814, had entirely remodelled the whole system of the Dresden theatre, dismissed the Secondas, declared the theatre a state institution, and re-organised the management of the establishment. These new arrangements the King had accepted, and left unaltered on his return in 1815; and the clever, active, amiable Count Heinrich Vitzthum had been placed by him at the head of affairs.

The history of the development of the Dresden theatre and the royal choir up to the period when Weber was called upon to lend a helping hand, had thus been a singular one. These institutions had received their whole artistic direction from the will and taste of the court, apart from any national feeling. Fostered by a foreign element, which had been introduced by the religious connexion of the court with Italy, they had exercised no influence on the heart or feelings of the people. They had existed only as types of courtly and exclusive taste. They had sunk in their original Italian form, not by the effort of any awakened national feeling, as in Berlin, but solely from reasons of economy, again emanating from the court. When they had entered more into the domain of the

public, it had been foreign intervention alone which had transformed the mongrel institute, half court establishment and half private speculation, as the theatre then was, into one more immediately appertaining to the state, and, as such, an arena for the cultivation of national taste. No less peculiar were the social conditions of Dresden life at the period of Weber's arrival; and as the sources from whence all his joys and sorrows sprang, during his intimate connexion with them, they also call for some mention.

As has been already intimated, the whole life of the Saxon capital in the year 1817 moved almost exclusively around the court and its dependencies. The entire population was animated by the blood which flowed from them, through countless small arteries, to the farthest extremities of the body politic. In marked contrast to his ancestors, King Friedrich August lived, with his wife Marie Amalie Auguste von Zweibrücken, in the bosom of his family, and in the most economical and simplest style. This simplicity was shared by his brothers, Princes Anton and Max, but tempered by considerable sociability and amiability of manner. The former was distinguished by a certain degree of musical talent; the latter was the father of that Princess Amalie of Saxony, who, as a justly-distinguished dramatic authoress, has taken an eminent place in German literature. Etiquette at the court of Friedrich August was of the severest kind, even moderated, as it was, by the friendly manner of the young princes and princesses. The horror of the King for any innovation, and his strict conservative

notions respecting all the old lifeless forms of ceremonial in every circumstance of life, had given the Dresden court the appearance of a princely household, which, like that of the "Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," had been buried from the world and all its outward influences for long, long-forgotten years. The tide of war and revolution had swept over it, and brought no change in its forms. Never had the King appeared on foot in the public streets; never had his voice been heard by his people. In their eyes he was a grand Lama of mystery; and yet he enjoyed a species of popularity. As was to be expected in the case of a prince who held himself thus apart from all the realities of existence, not the smallest wave of the ocean of life reached his feet, unless borne in the shape of official reports, presented by official hands, and tainted with all the bitter narrow-mindedness belonging to bureaucratic views. All thus depended upon the choice of his advisers; and this choice, shut out as the King was from all men who thought and felt like men, and thus utterly ignorant of human nature, depended even more upon his good luck than his good will. Good will he always had; good fortune in his choice of counsellors but seldom. Neither Count Marcolini or Count Einsiedel were men capable of guiding the vessel of the state, tossed as it was between the great ocean of Austria on the one side, and Prussia on the other, for the greater glory of their sovereign, the prosperity of the land, or the elevation of the character of the people.

The former minister, a cunning, grasping, clever

Italian, who had only fostered all the King's tendencies to exclusiveness, was already dead. The latter now ruled supreme as cabinet minister. His influence with the King was boundless; for even when Friedrich August had convictions of his own, the minister knew how to prepare the mould in which they were to take a shape. Count Einsiedel was a man of refined manners, but of the utmost formality. The strict regulations of the bureaucratic arena in which he had made his career, had given him habits of the nicest order, which were doubtless of considerable advantage in the conduct of state affairs, at all events as far as regarded their internal administration. He laboured indefatigably. But yet there is scarce any period in the history of Saxony when there was such an obvious absence of all talent, all tact, all largeness of ideas in the management of the state, as under the ministry of Detlev Einsiedel. All his ideas upon worldly affairs were small, narrow, mean, almost childish. He had never enlarged his mind by travel, or seen any thing of the world beyond his own country. In this respect he was like a man who had only looked at his house from within, and knew nothing of the damaged places without, through which wind and rain might come in. With such an education, all progress which could come from beyond his own country was a horror to him. All who had travelled or studied in foreign lands he looked upon with mistrust. When obliged to give an order to Thorwaldsen, he bestowed it solely and expressly because the illustrious Dane had given instruction to

two young Saxons. No Saxon, he was wont to affirm, could be a good patriot who had intercourse with the world without; and unfortunately Einsiedel's teaching had a fatal influence upon the national character of Saxony, until comparatively very modern times.

Between the court and its immediate dependencies on the one hand, and the nobility and middle classes on the other, stood the more animated and agreeable circle of the foreign ministers, resident at the court of Saxony. Their houses were far the most pleasant to frequent; as all talent and all intellect were freely and hospitably received in them, without any consideration of rank, title, or position. Here the Saxon nobility, accustomed as it was to live in dull seclusion, partly from feelings of old-fashioned pride, partly from motives of economy, mingled in some degree with another world; but few of its own houses were open to reception. The royal family was seldom seen, and never known to show itself in the saloons of the nobility. In such a state of society, consequently, any enjoyment of sociability was confined almost entirely, in that circle which called itself "society," to assemblies of no very luxurious description in the "Noble Casino" and the "Ressource," two club-houses confined to the members of the aristocracy—the latter for gentlemen only. The pleasures of these assemblies consisted in dancing, gambling, and very "bald disjointed chat," to which "creature comforts" of the most modest description were supposed to give an additional relish. The tone of such parties was, of course, a mere reflection of court manner, without

possessing, however, the relief given to rigid court etiquette by the liveliness and urbanity of many members of the royal family. Exclusiveness was their watchword; innovation, progress, cultivation of ideas, were their pet aversions.

True sociability, as far as it was known, was the attribute only of the real representatives of the Dresden public to be found among the principal citizens and government officials, who in summer thronged the pleasant places of public resort with which the beautiful environs of the capital were studded, and in winter crowded the theatre, the concerts, and the balls and entertainments given in their own subscription-rooms, the Harmonie, the Albina, and others. But even here an imitation of court-tone was considered to be the standard of true propriety. A dull, quiet, colourless, although polite and good-tempered demeanour was cherished with as much reverence as though mediocrity were an idol to be worshipped. Enthusiasm, openness of opinion, demonstrativeness of manner, were as much repudiated here as in the more courtly circles as evidences of "bad tone." The general respect for all alike who are well educated and well mannered—the main principle, in fact, of the true "gentleman"—was unknown. Under the Einsiedel system of bureaucratic education, the strictest hierarchical observance was the only rule of society to be studied. In whatever elevation a man's talents or acquirements might have placed him, he was to be judged and treated only according to his bureaucratic standing. No man dared to speak above his breath

before assuring himself that no higher acolyte in the government hierarchy was near him. Subserviency, meanness, and abnegation of self-respect, were all looked upon as virtues under the euphonious term, "discretion." Freedom of intellectual cultivation was thus necessarily a quality utterly unknown; and Germany could not but shake its head with pity to look upon a country where progress was not only a dead letter, but a forbidden arcanum, and free expression of opinion a disreputable vulgarity. It naturally followed that utter instability, weakness, and want of judgment were observable in all that might be called, by courtesy, public opinion. Not very different was it among the lower classes. The same observance of dull respectability had filtered down even to their level, and reigned paramount even in their celebrated rifle-matches. Of any independent feeling, national humour, or marked national character, there was not a trace. Even in their own masked balls they were as respectably polite in their manner to each other, and crowded about with as much decorum, as if they had been court-counsellors or assessors, fearful of missing due expression of titulature, or of treading on each other's toes. "Quiet!" was inscribed upon the banner of all social life in Dresden in the year 1817; "quiet!" was the watchword of high and low; "quiet!" was the end and aim and supreme good of all.

Such artistic and literary life as was to be found in the Saxon capital was wholly unconnected with any other social relations, and was an isolated state

of existence chiefly animated by strangers alone. The literary men there resident, with the exception of the great Ludwig Tieck, who stood apart, were so imbued, however, with the prevailing character of the place, that they may be said to have formed a school of literature of their own,—the Dresden school; the chief characteristics of which were rambling sentimentality, romanticism with shepherd's crook and powdered pigtail, humour without life, lubricity without passion, impotency of invention, and effeminacy of expression,—combined, however, with undoubted talent, cleverness of style, and genuine goodwill. The chief members of this clique were the constant objects of Tieck's satire and derision. For some years past a certain Baron von Seckendorf had been accustomed to assemble this society weekly in his house, where they were hospitably treated with tea and bread-and-butter! Under these auspices this literary society received the appellation of "The Poets' Tea." By degrees it acquired a considerable extension. The talented and able minister von Nostitz, himself an author under the name of Arthur von Nordstern, took up the affair with considerable zeal. Receptions were instituted in the houses of the married members, in which the ladies took a prominent —perhaps too prominent a part. "The Poets' Tea" lost its silly designation for a slightly less affected one, "The Circle of Song." Poetry was here read and declaimed; and critical opinions were given. Tieck called the society the great "Incense Institute," whither every member, as he expressed it, "brought

his own censer, to swing under every body's nose, and where every lady had a wreath of laurel under her chair, wherewith to crown a poet at a moment's warning." But whatever Tieck might say, and whatever true taste might dictate, people were entertained after their own manner. A pleasant tone prevailed. Not only did men of science read their lucubrations; but the Italian singers sang, and the best musicians made music on these occasions; and however weak and childish the workings of this society may have proved, at all events it had the merit of being the only central-point for the encouragement of literature and art in Dresden. At the time of Weber's arrival in 1817, the society was in the zenith of its development; and among its principal members he found some who were destined to have an influence on his career, or at all events to form points of interest in his life. As the chief of these may be reckoned, along with the worthy president of the society, Arthur von Nordstern, the indefatigable and apt Carl Theodor Winkler, well known under his pseudonym of "Theodor Hell," and Friedrich Kind, a man who never failed in consciousness of his own genius, and played at being "prince of poets" much as a child might play at being a king.

Such were the social relations with which Weber was now to mix, which he was to accept or to dominate, which were to influence his genius and his career, or to be influenced by his manner of exercising his vocation. A few words more respecting the more immediate condition of his future sphere of

action. As may be gathered from the sketch already given of the history of the Dresden opera and its public, up to this period there had been, strictly speaking, no German opera in the capital of Saxony. But during the Russian and Prussian occupation of the country, the notions of national development, which floated every where around, had even penetrated Saxony; and the idea of establishing a national German opera in Dresden began to be mooted. It was not, however, until the return of the King that any positive steps were taken to that effect. Both the Counts Vitzthum had taken up the affair with great animation; and, aided in their endeavours by the general wish of the public, they had carried out their project. In spite of the resistance of Count Einsiedel, who as a novelty alone was opposed to the idea, and in spite of the sneering of the aristocratic party, which hated the very thought of an establishment bearing "a vulgar German name," and set up as a rival to "true distinguished taste," Weber's appointment was effected. The creation of this new establishment was only conceded, however, with the express injunction, that, although the services of the present choir might be used as far as they could be made available, the strictest economy must be exercised in any new arrangements. Under these circumstances, Weber could not but see at once how hard would be the struggle for him against the indifference of the court, the antipathy of the nobility, and the personal opposition of the old Italian troop; how difficult, almost impossible, the task committed

to his hands. Beyond his own energies and his extensive experience, he had nothing upon which to rely, except the suppressed and modest voice of the public, and the confidence and attachment of his chief. But he resolved to grapple with the work fearlessly, in trust and hope.

Count Heinrich von Vitzthum, then at the head of the direction of the theatre, was a man of more enlarged ideas and far-seeing views than any servant of the state as yet known in Saxony. In personal appearance he was far from prepossessing; he was tall and thin, and afflicted with a deafness, which stood greatly in the way of his energy and activity. His manner, consequently, was not always agreeable. But all who approached him near enough to know his rare sincerity, his love of justice, and his enthusiasm for all that was noble and good, admired and respected him. At the same time his straightforwardness, his outspoken truth, and his firmness of mind earned him few friends, as might be well expected, in the state of society in Dresden at the time. Count Einsiedel was certainly not one of them. Vitzthum's largeness of ideas, independence of manner, and want of "quiet," were odious to him. Still more objectionable appeared to him the thorough firm understanding which soon subsisted between two such energetic and fearless men as Vitzthum and Weber; and he never failed to express his animosity to both, by word or deed, whenever opportunity offered. The most effective means of lowering them both, he thought to find in a marked preference shown

to Weber's colleague, Francesco Morlacchi, the capellmeister of the Italian opera, and to the Italian concert-master, Polledro.

Francesco Morlacchi, originally a violinist, two years older than Weber, was just the man to make the best use of the advantages to be derived from the favour of the minister. He had commenced his career, as dramatic composer, in the year 1807; and his operas, among which "La Principessa per ripiego" and "Le Danaïde" were the most celebrated, had obtained a great amount of success on all the lyrical stages of Italy. More especial furore had been created by his scena of "Saffo," composed for the celebrated and beautiful cantatrice Marcolini, who had recompensed the young maestro by an urgent recommendation to her relative, Count Camillo Marcolini, then minister in Dresden. The result had been his appointment as capellmeister in the Saxon capital, where his first production, as composer, the opera of "Raoul de Crequi," was a failure. His first compositions in church-music at Dresden were not much more successful. But, little by little, he had made his way with the Dresden public, or rather with the Saxon court. His "Villanella Rapita" had thrown the court into a perfect delirium of delight. The King himself had been enchanted with Morlacchi's compositions. Consequently, Count Einsiedel, who in reality had no taste for art, declared himself the great patron and admirer of the Italian; and what could the court do but follow suit? As a musician, Morlacchi was talented, industrious, and thoroughly versed

in all the technicalities of his art, which he adored; but in the conductor's stool, although his ear was fine, he failed in energy and power, on account of his unwillingness to find fault and correct mistakes. As a man, he was a true pupil of the Jesuits, under whom he had studied, loving to use intrigue for the simplest matters, and full of unnecessary finesse. During all the years he had resided in Germany, he had purposely never learned its language, in order to have excuses for any misunderstandings it was his wish to make. His want of manliness, his slyness, and his subserviency rendered him antipathetical to Count Vitzthum.

Morlacchi had looked upon the appointment of Polledro, a pupil of the celebrated Paganini, as concert-director, with an evil eye, and had declared himself the intruder's enemy. But, on the appearance of Weber in the field, he had been cunning enough to seek a reconciliation with the vacillating Polledro, and make a new ally of him. Another personage, who of his own free will ranged himself on Morlacchi's side, was a German church-music composer,—Schubert, an excellent musician, but a weak vain old man, wholly brought up in the true Saxon notions of Italian music, and completely antiquated in his tastes. He had possessed himself of the notion that he was to be the capellmeister of the newly-organised German opera, as by right and privilege; and the young upstart Weber could never be forgiven by him.

Strange to say, the two men who ranged them-

selves on Weber's side, as his truest friends and most honest partisans, were two old men of Italian origin, and both veterans of the "good old time" of Italian musical supremacy. The one was the great barytone, Bassi, whose name has been rendered immortal by the fact that it was for him that Mozart composed the part of "Don Juan;" and an honest old fellow Bassi was. Though now fifty years of age, and almost without any voice, he still charmed the public by his inimitable acting, his noble bearing, his refined humour, and the elegance and beauty of his style. Morlacchi had been sensible enough to appoint this talented and experienced man to the post of stage-manager of the Italian Opera. The other was old Franz Seconda, the former director of the theatre, who, after forty years, spent for the greater part with scolding actresses, arrogant actors, and swearing drivers on the road between Dresden and Leipsic, had been imprisoned by the Russians as a French spy, and deprived of his directorship. Under the new organisation of the court theatre, he had been appointed acting manager and treasurer. He was a man of the past, bewildered to find himself amidst new times and new men. Daily might the little old man be seen trudging to the theatre in all weathers, with his powdered wig, his knee-breeches, and his shoe-buckles. Servile or insolent, according as those he addressed were supposed to be in favour or disgrace, he was the very type of a Saxon official of the period. Yet, singular to say, both Seconda and Bassi (a far different man) proved powerful supports to

Weber in his honest endeavours to fulfil his vocation. They stretched out their hands to him, and gave him all the benefit of such experience and influence as they possessed, although from completely different motives.

The materials out of which Weber was expected to create his new world of German opera were not of the most promising kind. The actors of German comedy and musical farce were his own to deal with; and command had been given that his troop should be increased, when necessary, by the members of the Italian Opera company. The former consisted of excellent actors and actresses, who, according to the custom of the times, were sufficiently grounded in music to take small musical parts, but who had neither the means or the experience to carry out the music of great operas. In this respect Weber was like a good general at the head of an army, animated by the best feelings, but without the proper arms to fight with. It was a bold undertaking, therefore, on his part to attempt to rival, with such weak undisciplined forces, the brilliant, well-established, and practised Italian Opera. He had considerable reliance, however, not only on his own experienced talent for organisation, but on the awakened spirit of national feeling in favour of his German opera.

With all these various influences seething and fermenting around him, Weber took up his staff with confidence and hope.

CHAPTER II.

WEBER'S NEW FUNCTIONS.

It was on the evening of the 13th of January that Weber reached Dresden. The same night he wrote to his beloved: "It was with the strangest feelings that I drove down the mountain-side, and saw lying before me the city, within the walls of which a life's career is to be decided. May God give it his blessing! All that lies in my power to do shall be well and truly done." On the very first evening of Weber's arrival in his new sphere of activity, he stumbled upon a man whom he had previously known, and who was destined to prove his firm ally,—a man, too, who had the courage, under all circumstances, to show his friendship for the young composer; and yet the Kammer-Musikus Schmiedel was the type of the smaller court officials of Dresden at the time. The largely-built coarse-featured man, with his thick brown wig, his enormous spectacles on his nose, and his hat perched backwards on his head, was accustomed to tread softly and cautiously, both morally and physically, and to look upon all the little meannesses

of court life as the chief rules of existence. His position as the brother of the king's valet, to whom popular report ascribed an enormous influence at court, was looked upon as an exceptional and important one. He himself was wont to set great store by it. But the good man devoted himself to Weber, and took constant pains to put in the inexperienced placeman's hands that thread to the dark labyrinth of court intrigues, without which he deemed no position could be properly consolidated. His first act of kindness was to assist Weber in hunting up a pleasant abode, in which he might find, as soon as possible, that home which was always the unsettled artist's fondest aspiration.

Close by the city walls in those days was a row of small houses, with pretty little gardens, popularly called "The Italian Village," from the fact of the spot having been first occupied by the Italians brought over to Dresden to build the Catholic church. One of these houses belonged to an old, formal, scrupulously neat Italian lady, the sister of the deceased soprano singer Ceccarelli. It stood back in a garden-court, behind a dark palisade and gateway,—bright, clean, and still. Little traffic ever disturbed its solitude; from its gate a shady alley of chestnut-trees led nearly to the theatre. Weber was delighted with the quiet nook. In a very short time his pianoforte was in the largest of the rooms; his work-table at the window was covered with scores and sheets of music-paper; simple furniture surrounded him; his small library, and the portraits of a few celebrated men, were hang-

ing on his walls; carpets were every where laid down (for Weber, with his delicate nervous organisation, hated the noise of feet on the bare boards); a man-servant was hired, as was necessary to the dignity of his new position. In short, his first care was to line comfortably his own little batchelor's nest, as a preparation for the still more comfortable and shapely one which he designed for his future mate. To the "little birdy" who was soon to share his nest he sent off a full description of every nook and corner of his abode, every piece of furniture, every accessory, even to the sofa-cushion "embroidered by thee, my love."

Weber's very first visitor in his new home was Francesco Morlacchi himself. The cunning Italian had heard of his colleague's arrival, and hastened to "pay his respects," with all that suppleness of purpose of which he was a master. The maestro spoke no German, and but little French; and Weber resolved at once to take an Italian teacher, to give him a greater insight into the language. It may be here said that, in a very short time, Weber's perfect knowledge of the favourite court language of Dresden placed him on an equal footing, in the matter of conversation, with Morlacchi himself.

According to his usual practical habit, Weber was at once active in paying visits, presenting letters, and reclaiming old acquaintances. Among the latter were the celebrated archæologist Böttcher, and the author Friedrich Kind; both were men, with whom subsequent circumstances connected him intimately. In writing to Caroline Brandt relative to the "gala"

dress, which the strict etiquette of Dresden official life compelled him to assume, he says jestingly, "I suppose I shall get used to it at last, and run about all day in shoes and stockings without being put out. Perhaps I may actually get calves at last. Who knows? What a treat that would be! wouldn't it? Besides, I am not so sure that I don't look very nice with my three-cornered cocked hat, Saxon cockade and all, under my arm."

But, from the first, all was not destined to go smoothly for the new placeman. Upon presenting himself to his new chief, Count Heinrich Vitzthum, with his heart full of gratitude towards this excellent man, Weber could not but trace a certain embarassment in the Count's manner, in spite of all his friendliness. The riddle was soon solved. The Count thought it his duty to speak out, and explain to Weber the nature of the slippery ground on which he stood—the ill-will to be expected from influential quarters, and the intrigues which would probably be used to render all his doings as "harmless" as possible. Weber was startled at the picture. Still greater was the shock which he received on meeting his old friend Luigi Bassi, the celebrated barytone, who burst out into expressions of rage at seeing his "dear young capellmeister" placed in a subordinate position to "that abominable Morlacchi," and of wonder that Weber could ever have condescended to accept a post like that. Weber at first could not comprehend his old friend's meaning. He was engaged by Count Vitzthum, he said, as capellmeister, and as such was

fully co-equal in position to Morlacchi. "No such thing," cried Bassi in a passion. "It little matters what may be your engagement with the Count. That will probably be disavowed in high quarters. Your diploma is made out as director of the German opera, not capellmeister. I have seen it." Weber's indignation was only equalled by his surprise. He could scarcely believe what he had heard. But he ceased at once all his preparations for instalment, determined to leave Dresden directly, should Bassi's words prove true, and he should have thus been juggled with. He hastened to the theatre to ask an explanation of Count Vitzthum, who, with sorrow and confusion, confirmed what Weber had heard. In spite of all that had been negotiated, the cabinet diploma had falsified the Count's given word. The unhappy man entreated Weber, for both their sakes, for the sake of the art they both loved, to remain at least for a time, and see whether all could not be made right. Weber left the Count without any decided answer, but the next morning, again declared that he neither would nor could be placed in a subordinate position to the Italian. That same afternoon, Weber was to be presented to the company; and, at the Count's renewed supplications, he at last consented to lend a hand to the furtherance of the German opera scheme, until a new "director" could be found. He protested, however, that no consideration would retain him longer, unless indeed he were placed in a position co-equal with that of Morlacchi. To these terms the Count was compelled to give his acquiescence. On his own respon-

sibility he presented Weber to the company as the new "capellmeister;" adding, that great value was evidently laid in "the highest quarters" on the establishment of the German opera, since so distinguished a man was selected to be placed at its head.

Weber was troubled in mind: he was never at any time a speaker. But he felt that, especially under the circumstances of his doubtful position, it was more than ever necessary to inspire respect. After a few words of pleasant and friendly greeting, and assurances of his goodwill and interest to all, he terminated with the astounding declaration, "In return I expect implicit obedience. I shall be just, but pitilessly severe with all who need severity, myself among the number." Such expressions had never before been heard by any of the company. For many generations, gentle wishes, not commands, had been the order of the day. At first all stood aghast and dumb. On leaving the theatre, at least two-thirds of the company declared themselves against the "impertinent young musical director." The members of the instrumental department were more than all indignant. Never had the most celebrated of capellmeisters thus dared to address the celebrated orchestra. And yet—such miracles will truth work—in a short time, some of the bitterest enemies of the hour became Weber's stanchest friends, supporters, and admirers.

There are still living many old members of the Dresden orchestra who can remember the appearance of Weber on this memorable occasion. He stood in the midst of them a little narrow-chested man, with

long arms, and a thin pale face, from which his eyes gleamed forth in lightning flashes through his spectacles. When he was pleased, a smile, which was positively enchanting, played over his otherwise serious mouth; when affected by the occurrences of the moment, he bent his head gently sideways, with an air of peculiar tenderness and earnestness. He wore a blue frockcoat with metal buttons, tight pantaloons, and Hessian-boots with tassels. A scrupulously clean white cravat with embroidered ends, in which was stuck a handsome diamond pin, encircled his neck. Over all he carried a tawny-coloured cloak with several capes, a broad round hat on his head. Nothing in his whole attire indicated any artistic pretension or affectation; and in the streets, or in a room, he might have easily been overlooked. Once remarked, however, Weber was sure to charm and captivate by his air of intellectual refinement and elegance of manner.

Spite of the uncomfortable position in which he was placed, Weber never lost sight of the courage and confidence which generally sustained him under trying circumstances. He wrote to Caroline: "The determination I have displayed, cannot fail, I trust, in producing a good result. I have shown that I am not a man to be lightly dealt with, that under any circumstances I am prepared to act as firmly as honourably, and that I shall never be put to it to find an existence elsewhere. The Count still assures me, that he has no doubt of eventually obtaining my appointment as capellmeister for life. I bide my time,

and trust all to God's hands." Meanwhile, however, he considered it to be his duty to place a formal exposition of the circumstances, his just expectations, his wrongs, and his resolves, in the hands of Count Vitzthum. Nothing could be more characteristic of Weber's firmness and openness, as well as of the calm temperate manner which the experiences of life had taught him to acquire, than was this letter. Weber was fully justified in his confidence in the zeal and friendship of Count Vitzthum. Such active steps were taken by this honourable and right-thinking man, that, within a fortnight, he was able to inform Weber, with the sincerest joy, that he had been completely successful, that the diploma as capellmeister had been signed by the King, and orders given that it should be communicated to all personages connected either with the Italian or German opera, or the Church music. Out of evil had come good. Nothing could be clearer now than Weber's position, as regarded Count Einsiedel and Morlacchi, as well as the other Italians who were using their influence with the minister to mischievous intent. "The Italians," he wrote Lichtenstein, "have naturally worked heaven and earth and hell to swallow up the whole German opera. But they have found a precious hard morsel to digest in me. I am not so easy to be swallowed. I can maintain my rights, and defend my true position. . . . I have positively no materials here to work upon, from the commonest copyist to the prima-donna; and a thousand difficulties are thrown in my way at every step. But, courage!" And to Caroline:

"I am out of the frying-pan into the fire, you say. But not as you think. The fire will only warm my zeal; and when once all is in order, it will be for life. The beginning is every thing: and trouble, anxiety, or mortification shall not fright me. . . . At all events, I shall not stand under Monsieur Morlacchi; and German and Italian art will, please fate, have equal rights." So much was won: and with his mind more at ease, Weber was now enabled to study the materials placed at his disposal for the establishment of a fresh branch of art in the Saxon capital, as well as the public, before which it was to be laid as a new dish for its delectation.

The day came for Weber's presentation at court. This important event was not destined to pass over very propitiously. No doubt in his court-dress, which had been borrowed for the occasion, and was by no means an immaculate fit, Weber's appearance was anything but imposing. His long neck craned awkwardly out of the low-standing collar of his coat; his thin hands protruded, contrary to all etiquette, out of the sleeves of his old-fashioned uniform; his sword would insist on getting between his legs. "And oh, my calves!" he wrote to Caroline; "they might have done honour to a poodle." The King received him somewhat coldly, marking rather sternly the position he now held as a court-servant, moved his head slightly, and only said, "I am glad to possess your talent." The Queen was more friendly, and inquired kindly after his future wife, whose performances in Dresden she had wit-

nessed with pleasure. A few words more—their majesties swept past the young capellmeister and retired to their apartment; and all was over. To this cold formality of the strictest etiquette, the friendly good-tempered reception of the princes Anton and Max afterwards formed a striking contrast.

Meanwhile, the circle of friends and acquaintances which surrounded Weber at Dresden was fast increasing. Some, no doubt, received the celebrated new comer with real delight; others, as yet uncertain how far the stranger might stand in favour in high quarters, were smooth and bland, and made sweet faces, and held themselves ready to spin the thread of friendship to any extent, or snap it off altogether, according to future circumstances. But all, more or less imbued with strict hierarchical notions, were alike astounded at the cordiality and eagerness with which the foreign ministers resident in Dresden sought Weber's society, and welcomed him in their midst.. "My welcome in Dresden," he wrote to Caroline, "is not to run off the reel so dully as I at first surmised. All the ambassadors are after me. Some of them, such as Counts Luxburg and Oelsen, the Bavarian and Prussian Ministers, are old acquaintances . . . . The Italians are all making awfully wry faces at this; but that matters little to me, as long as I can accept such attentions with honour and independence." Of all the houses of the foreign ministers the most agreeable to Weber—the one in which he most found a home—was that of the Austrian Am-

bassador, Count Bombelles, whose wife, Ida Brun, although of inferior birth, and once in the service of the celebrated Madame de Stäel, had made herself, by her talent, her amiability, and her grace, one of the greatest ornaments of the "high society" of the period. One of his principal admirers and supporters was Morier, the English Minister, an athletic man, generally reputed coarse and rough in manner. But to Weber he was devoted; and many a time and oft might the little capellmeister be seen walking along with the hugely-built diplomatist—a boy by a giant's side. To the noble Casino, the Ressource, and the Harmonie, Weber was at once introduced; and, with his customary quick-sightedness, soon discovered that, whilst in the Casino he was generally sure to meet with adversaries, it was in the Harmonie and Albina he had to look for supporters and allies.

The fame of the celebrated composer of "Leier und Schwert" and "Kampf und Sieg" had preceded him, as a reckless wandering artist, a man of new times and new ideas—an unquiet spirit, accustomed to go his own way, and do the strangest things according to a peculiar eccentric fashion. Every body, consequently, was prepared for a certain amount of independence and eccentricity, or at least what was so considered by the Dresdeners. But in spite of all preparation for any display of strangeness, the first act in which Weber came prominently before the public was one which aroused such general astonishment, that men were petrified with horror.

He actually published in the *Abendzeitung* an article, in which he expounded his own views upon the establishment of a German opera in Dresden; boldly avowed, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, what were the materials in his hands; and told the public what it had to hope and expect from his conductorship. And—was it possible?—this astounding article was positively signed by his own name! Could it be believed? A royal capellmeister, the salaried official of a court, the essence of which lay in mystery, secrecy, and silence, had ventured to speak aloud to the public! A royal official, a creature whose very office bound him only to look, to speak, to act, according to the will and pleasure of superior mightinesses, who could not be supposed to have any will, or even opinion of his own, had dared to treat a public as if it were a creature to be considered,—had dared to have ideas, to write them down, and—good heavens!—to print them! A royal servant had rushed into print! Such things had never been known, never heard of, never dreamed of in the wildest dreams of Dresden fancy. The direst expectations of what a strange man, given to novelty, might do, did not come within a hundred miles of this awful reality. The article was a thunderbolt. "My programme-article," wrote Weber to his intended, "has created a great sensation—petrifaction and terror on the one hand, pleasure and respect on the other. All right! The good ones of the earth begin to love me, and the bad ones to fear me."

But this awful deed was not enough. Still more unfavourably, if possible, was the revolutionary young capellmeister looked upon when he actually went so far as to invite his colleagues, Morlacchi, Schubert, and Polledro to meet some of the singers and actors of the theatre at a banquet given by him in the "Goldener Engel," and even mixed up together the German and Italian members of the operatic corps at a ball which he gave, with the same splendid hospitality, at the "Hotel de Pologne," a few days afterwards. Where was all discipline? where all subordination? where all well-established form? These dreadful facts, duly distorted by the Italians, who had themselves been Weber's guests, came necessarily to the ears of the public and the court. People shook their heads with pity and consternation. How was a man to inspire respect, maintain his position, and enforce discipline, who had actually so far forgotten all form, and so wilfully sprung over all barriers of social etiquette, as to make merry with his subordinates? No; he was lost! The Casino triumphed; and the Harmonic hung its head in despair.

All the tittle-tattle of the affrighted Dresdeners affected Weber but little. He looked on and smiled, and turned to the duties of his new office. Collecting, copying, and correcting scores and parts, trial-rehearsals of vocalists and instrumentalists, teaching the weaker members of the company, besides conducting a portion of the music in the Catholic church, fully occupied his time. The reorganisation

of the orchestra, long accustomed to a degree of cool negligence in Italian operas, in which the instrumental portion was never prominent, but not sufficing, in Weber's opinion, for the elaborate and important instrumental accompaniments of the great works of the German masters, was a task too heavy to be attempted, before he had established the fullest trust and confidence of its members in his own conductorship. Besides, the performance of German opera was now expected, and could not be much longer delayed. Weber determined to commence his series of operas with Mehul's "Joseph and his Brethren," an opera containing but one female part; of but minor importance in choruses; and, although composed by a Frenchman, composed in true German style. In his first rehearsal of this opera, Weber made his *début* in royal service. He entered the orchestra a few minutes before the appointed hour, seated himself on his conductor's stool, and looked so sharply through his spectacles at the various singers and musicians, as they came lounging in too late, after long-established careless fashion, that, although he never said a word, they were far from comfortable in their minds. They saw with astonishment that the looks of the official at his work wore a far different expression from those which had animated the face of their jovial charming host of private life. At the next rehearsal almost all appeared punctually, although with sulky looks. "Bravo!" said Weber then; "this is as it should be. Punctuality is necessary to all, but especially to artists and soldiers,

to give at least some sort of regularity to their lives." The first rehearsal was a trial to all. Never had so strict a capellmeister been known in the annals of the stage. He had ears and eyes on every side; a rapid glance reprimanded the least note out of tune in the furthest instrument. Again and again he interrupted the rehearsal to go over unsteady passages. Now he mounted from the orchestra upon the stage to direct the movements according to his own ideas, and put singers and choristers in their places; now he descended from stage to orchestra to correct mistakes. So precise, so sharp were his directions, that not a mouth opened to murmur. When all was over, the members of the company dispersed, wearied and exasperated at this new manner of rehearsing an opera, and grumbling to their hearts' content; whilst Weber, the indefatigable, held long colloquies with the wardrobe-keeper over the dresses, with the scene-painter over the new scenes, with carpenters over new methods of obtaining more order and precision in scene-shifting. Just as actively were the other rehearsals continued without interruption. Artists still grumbled, it is true, at the unusual exertion; but they soon began to be convinced that their new capellmeister's system was the right one for the true production of a work of art. They saw how beauty gradually rose out of a chaos; they soon felt love for the work; good will and true pleasure took the place of murmuring and discontent.

Mehul's opera was produced on the 30th January;

and Weber, as had been his custom of late, published two days before, in the *Abendzeitung*, an introductory and explanatory notice. This new proceeding, although obviously intended in the truest interests of art, was looked upon not only as improper, but as highly suspicious, and was afterwards used as a handle against Weber by his enemies. Curiosity and expectation had been much excited by the opening of the German opera. The small house was crowded. The King himself appeared, saying, as he entered his box, "If the representation goes well, Weber deserves all credit." The representation did go well—far beyond all expectation. So much fire, so much ensemble, such delicate lights and shades were unusual. The choruses had never been known to be sung with so much purity and so much spirit; they excited universal astonishment. No doubt the individual singers were thrown into the shade when compared with the Italians; and of this fact the Italian party took every advantage. But the care with which scenery and dresses had been arranged no one could attack. Weber had hunted through all the great works on Egypt in the Royal Library. No less artistic and picturesque were the groupings of the masses, due to Weber's arrangement. His heart had been in his work. He was determined that the representation should be as perfect as he could make it. During the evening Genast, the tenor, took upon himself to introduce a florid passage in Italian style. An angry look, shot upon the stage

by Weber, so frightened the singer, that, as soon as all was over, he ran into his dressing-room for the purpose of putting a cloak over his dress, and getting out of the theatre as fast as possible to avoid the coming storm. But Weber was too quick for him. He caught the delinquent before his escape. "What's that you were doing?" he thundered at him. "Don't you think that if Mehul had wanted any such crinkum-crankum he would have put it in better than you? No more such tom-foolery for the future! Good night. Go home and sleep off your fit of Italian intoxication." The applause was great; and the conductor's merits received general recognition. It was remarked by all, that the King, who had a very good ear, and was accustomed to cough impatiently when any thing displeased him, had never once uttered the ominous sound; and if Majesty was pleased, who could be critical? In truth, the production of a work of a new kind, with a troop of singers who had never sung in great opera, and with entirely fresh material, achieved in the space of eighteen days, was an almost incredible fact. The new capellmeister earned general respect; and the German opera party raised their heads accordingly. But one decided enmity ensued. A certain Fräulein aus dem Winkel, a blue-stocking, painter, and harp-player, and one of the "Poets' Tea" Society, took upon herself to publish in the *Abendzeitung* an article, sneering at the German opera, and contrasting it unfavourably with the Italian. Weber retorted by a biting witticism,

not in the best taste. The two were enemies for life.

Weber's association with the "Poets' Tea," however, was destined to be, in many ways, of considerable importance to him. For its president, the Minister Nostitz, known in the literary world as "Arthur von Nordstern," Weber had the greatest regard. As minister, Nostitz was generally supposed to be the most liberal of the King's counsellors, and the most energetically opposed to the oppressive, cramping, exclusive system of Count Einsiedel; as man, he was popular from his unfailing cheerfulness and amiability of manner; as author, admired for his lyrical productions. Weber was devoted to him. Several of his eldest daughter's verses—among others the charming cradle-song, "Schlaf Herzens Söhnchen"—were set by Weber to music. More especially he gave a peculiar charm to the meetings of the "Poets' Tea;" which gradually became more congenial to the young composer, than could have been expected from the sugar-sweet spirit pervading them—a spirit generally so unsympathetic to Weber's energetic nature. He was doubtless, and very naturally, flattered and pleased by the marked attention he received in such company, and the proofs of respect and admiration showered upon him. But one personage with whom he was thrown in constant intercourse in the society was to exercise a greater influence than all upon his development as artist, and his career as composer. This was Friedrich Kind.

The vain little poet had been reading, one evening, with his harsh creaking voice, portions of his drama of "Vandyke's Country Life." Weber found a certain dramatic spirit pervading the work, and on leaving the house with Kind, obtained from him the promise of an opera-book. A few days afterwards, on visiting Kind, Weber found that the promise had not been forgotten. Materials for a subject, in the form of tales, legends, fairy-stories, lay upon the table. Many subjects were proposed, discussed, and laid aside. At last Weber took up, by chance, a book. It was Apel's "Ghost-Stories." The composer suddenly remembered how he sat one day at Stift Neuburg, with his friend Alexander von Dusch, in the year 1810, and grew enthusiastic over the legend of "Der Freischütz." Did Kind know it? Yes, he did. The story was once more turned up. As before, both author and composer quickly became inspired by the subject. The more they discussed it, the more promising, the more congenial to the feelings of both, did it appear. But still there were objections. What would people say to the appearance of a reverend hermit and Old Nick himself upon the stage? And what would the censureship? They separated without coming to a decision. Both spent the wakeful night brooding over a subject which they would not make up their minds to lay aside. The next morning Kind hurried to Weber. He found the capellmeister in the theatre. What if they put the subject back to remote ages? This concession with

the triumph of innocence, and a happy termination, might obviate all difficulties. A hasty programme of the drama was sketched out between the two; and Kind departed, resolved at once to write the words of the opera-book of "Der Freischütz."

Weber's first notice of his opera is to be found in a letter to Caroline Brandt, of the 19th February 1817. "Friedrich Kind is going to begin an opera-book for me this very day. I shall see him again to-morrow to get the whole plan clear. The subject is admirable, interesting, and horribly exciting. Do you know the old national legend of "Der Freischütz?" After a second conference, author and composer fixed upon the title of "The Trial Shot" for the new opera. Kind was indefatigable. Within a week the words of the first act were lying upon Weber's table. "I've got my first act," Weber wrote again to Caroline; "it is charming. Kind hopes to have the whole ready in another fortnight. I shall then have the manuscript copied and sent off to you. I am very curious to hear what you will say to it. You are not easily pleased, I know, you little pug; and you will require something very super-extra for your old boy. Well! This is super-extra; for there's the very deuce in it. He appears as the Black Huntsman; and balls are made in a ravine at midnight, with spectral appearances around. Haven't I made your flesh creep upon your bones? eh?" Kind kept his word. By the first of March the whole book of "Der Freischütz" was in Weber's hands. It had been begun

and finished in ten days. "The whole opera is ready," wrote Weber to his intended, on the 3d of March, in a state of jubilee. "Kind was so inspired with his subject, that he could have no rest; and he has been working night and day. The title is changed. The opera is now to be called the "Jäger's Bride." I have no doubt that it will be very effective. There are many striking situations in it, and plenty of opportunities for great scenic and decorative effects. You'll be dying of curiosity and impatience, I know. I'll have it copied as soon as I can; and then Ducky shall have a sniff at it." It is apparent, from these remarks to his intended, that Weber had a great idea of the clever girl's clear judgment and tact in all matters appertaining to the stage; and it was well proved by subsequent occurrences, that he did right to rely on her practical good sense and correctness of taste. The opera-book was speedily copied, and sent off to Caroline. Her answer suggested sweeping changes in the book, which were of the greatest importance and effect. In Kind's original work the opera commenced with two scenes between Agathe, Aennchen, and the Hermit, which latter personage, as the book now stands, only appears at the end of the piece, somewhat after the fashion of a *Deus ex machinâ*. The earlier appearance of the worthy old gentleman would probably have rendered the explanation of the plot more perfect than it stands at present. But, on the other hand, how much the

feelings of the audience would have been cooled after the overture! how much the progress of the action would have been "dragged!" "Away with all these scenes!" wrote Caroline to Weber. "Plunge at once into the popular element. Begin with the scene before the pot-house."

Weber was at first annoyed at the suggestion. He had taken a mighty fancy to his "Hermit's Prayer," and a duett for soprano and bass at the opening of the act. He wrote to Caroline deprecating any alteration—"mutilation" he called it. But, even before her answer, he began to feel the correctness of her observations, and besought Kind to alter his book in the sense suggested by Caroline. The author would not hear of any change. He dwelt upon the damage to the clear understanding of his drama. His poet's vanity was up in arms. Any advantages to the effect upon the audience, as regarded the music, he refused stoutly to acknowledge. He reminded Weber of his promise to compose the work as it stood without a change. A quarrel was on the point of ensuing. Kind talked of withdrawing his book; but Weber's firmness in the cause, which he himself had at first battled against so strenuously, prevailed at last. The two opening scenes were cut out—to the great advantage of the general effect, who can doubt? How striking is the aspect of the crowded animated scene on the rising of the curtain after the stirring overture! Can any one fancy now a hermit's prayer and a preachy duett with the heroine? Often afterwards did Weber thank his

"public with two eyes," as he called Caroline, for this good counsel. · "The whole has now a far better effect," he wrote to her afterwards; "and I must thank you for that, my poppet. The idea was a bold one; but it has succeeded. The end too is somewhat altered; but it is no use your screaming, 'Away with him, away with him!' the old hermit can't be got rid of altogether. He will only appear, however, at the end to receive the apparently wounded Agathe in his arms, and wind up with a general reconciliation. Kind is all right now; and I am collecting ideas. . . . . That blessed opera, for which I have yearned so long in vain, is at last in my possession. And now, grant heaven that I may be enabled to fulfil the proverb, 'All's good that's long in coming.'" It was in his possession; and moreover he had made the opera-book his own. His own were the words which so inspired him, and which, as he expressed it, melodies poured forth to greet of their own accord. It was not without a considerable degree of embarrassment that he had asked of Kind what price he would take to sell the entire property of the book. The author was at first bent upon a share of the profits. But Weber demonstrated, by previous experience, to what unhappy complications such arrangements often led. At last Kind agreed to cede all property in the book for thirty ducats. The thirty ducats were paid in a few hours; and "Der Freischütz" was now Weber's own.

During the first few months, however, Weber could have little time for earnest composition. The

occupations, which called for all his care, were serious and manifold. A new system for the correct copying of scores and parts had to be organised and carried out. A plan for the foundation of a dramatic-musical library in the theatre was to be matured, permission for its establishment wrung from the unwilling novelty-hating Count Einsiedel, means of purchase found, and a commencement made. More than all, the reorganisation of the chorus occupied both time and thought. Supernumeraries, with decent voices but little skill, with a scant addition of a few of the subordinate singers, had been as yet the only supporters of the chorus. The alto and soprano voices had been hitherto supplied by boys, with little regard to personal appearance. Noble Roman ladies and vestal virgins had been personified by clumsy young fellows, with dirty paws, decked out with diadems and gowns, under which their heavy boots were ostentatiously obtruded. Weber's plans and reforms were considerable, and difficult of execution. The Italians looked on with envy; but with the conviction that all would be to their own profit. Moreover, new operas were to be studied and rehearsed, correspondences carried on, and negotiations effected, with "starring" engagements. Now and then sudden demands were made, and plans upset by royal interference. "I was at dinner," writes Weber, one day, in despair, "when I had to jump up and go at once to Count Vitzthum. The King insists upon hearing Madame Sessi"—(one of the passing stars)—"in the 'Vestalin,' on Saturday.

It is enough to drive one mad. All is put upon my back, as if there were nobody else to do any thing." In the midst of all this trouble and confusion, even extraneous demands were to be satisfied. Count Brühl, for instance, writes from Berlin, entreating Weber to compose a great air, an overture, and several instrumental pieces, for Müllner's tragedy of "Yngurd." The good friend and patron cannot be refused; and so whole nights are passed to execute the task, with the exception of the overture, for which Weber had to suggest his "Ruler of the Spirits." And, after all, the main result of the composer's ready compliance was a stormy paper-war with Müllner, on the subject of musical declamation.

Meanwhile, other personal cares were making incessant demands on Weber's time and thought. He expected, before long, his permanent appointment for life; and then, as he fondly hoped, he could welcome a wife to a comfortable, secure, and happy home. A home! a sweet nest for his "birdy!" It was the dearest desire of his soul; and thus every spare thought of his affectionate heart was for that little house, which was to be rendered worthy of his bride. Arrangements had to be made, furniture bought, every detail of a household sought out and supplied. In all his diffuse and lengthy letters to Caroline, for which, spite of all his multifarious occupations, he managed to steal time—only a lover knows how—were filled with minute accounts of all his household arrangements, and his purchases—chairs, crockery, curtains, knives and forks and spoons, pails,

brooms, and mustard-pot. Nothing was too small to be an item in the catalogue of all that was effected by this "labour of love." "Oh how my soul yearns," he wrote to his intended, "for the moment when I can lead you into the sweet nest which will be yours, and, with your head upon my breast, I can whisper to you, 'This is thy little kingdom, my own queen,' —and then you will frisk about, and busy yourself here and there, and order and put to rights, and then come back to play like any little pussy." "I was amused with your account of the 'Zauberflöte,'" he wrote again; "but you know I hope soon to see you lay by all your pretty Papagena feathers. All your satins and ermines must give place to a coarse apron then. You will only be applauded by my hungry stomach, called out before the cook-wench, and saluted with 'da capo' when you kiss your Carl. It is very shocking, I know. And what will my own pearl say to be dissolved in the sour vinegar of domestic life, and swallowed up by a bear of a husband?"

Whilst Weber was thus occupied, labouring for his art, as he laboured for his future domestic comfort, as he laboured in all things, every effort was made by the Italians, with Morlacchi at their head, to depreciate all his reforms, all his plans, all his exertions, as much as possible in the opinion of the public. But Morlacchi was himself too much of an artist not to prize, in his secret soul, the talent and energy of his young colleague at their true worth, as well as to fear them; he was, at the same time,

too crafty a man not to affect a deference for the opinion of the colleague whom he incessantly sought to crush. Thus, after the representation of his "Barber of Seville," he begged, with every appearance of humility, for his "dear colleague's judgment." Fortunately Weber, although the opera had but little success, was able to give with sincerity a favourable opinion of it. "There is much that is beautiful and praiseworthy in this music," he wrote himself; "the fellow has little musical knowledge, but he has talent, a flow of ideas, and especially a fund of good comic stuff in him." With the same show of deference, perhaps with the same secret design, Morlacchi laid before Weber his new oratorio of "Isacco," to Metastasio's words, with the request, that his "good friend" would write a criticism on the work. To this again Weber consented. An article on Morlacchi's oratorio was duly published in the *Abendzeitung*. But in this notice Weber cannot be entirely acquitted of a certain degree of diplomatic cunning. In this respect the article was a masterpiece. The work was but a sorry one; but, without bating an inch of the truth, or sacrificing his honour as a critic, Weber contrived, amidst a deluge of high-sounding phrases, and sincere praise of certain details, to conceal his own opinion of its general weakness. Whatever his confidence in Weber, however, Morlacchi was unwilling to put himself wholly in the power of a rival, and took especial care to read an Italian translation of the article before it was sent in to be printed:

But, amidst these outward semblances, measures were being taken by the Italian coterie to confound all Weber's plans for strengthening the troop of his German opera. In order to prevent all possible rivalry with the Italian opera, every singer, whom the German capellmeister sought to engage, was made, by intrigue, to appear incompetent. Yet should the German opera be expected to succeed, with a public accustomed to good singers, it was necessary to make new acquisitions. The Prague theatre had fallen into a state of insolvency. Weber proposed to engage Madame Grünbaum, an admirable singer, who was then at Prague. Count Vitzthum assented; and a hasty journey of Weber to that city was resolved upon.

Weber's heart beat high at the thought of thus having the unexpected joy of seeing his beloved. His happiness was but the calm before a storm. He was absolutely on the point of stepping into the travelling-carriage at his door, when a letter from Count Pachta was delivered to him. It announced the imminent bankruptcy of the firm, in the hands of which all his little fortune had been deposited at Prague. Not only his own savings, but those of his intended were in the bank. And now ruin threatened them, exactly at the moment when both needed all their little resources. His "evil star" was again in the ascendant. It was a rude shock. But still Weber was not daunted. "Courage!" he wrote in his diary; "Heaven has helped me thus far. It will help again at need. I trust to its mercy!" But courage was dif-

ficult to find. Weber felt the struggle sorely as he travelled, day and night, on that weary journey to Prague. On his arrival, he hurried to the theatre. The applause, won by his Caroline as Papagena in Mozart's "Zauberflöte," greeted his ears as he entered. Pale as death, but with an air of joy, as if he had no care upon his mind, he pressed his surprised and almost overpowered Caroline to his heart, as she came off the stage and fell into his arms. The sad warning proved but too true. Of all Weber's long savings only enough remained to supply the loss that his beloved would have endured. He suffered, but he suffered in silence. Not a word was said to the woman whose little all he had replaced; and it was not until long years afterwards that the wife learned, by a strange chance, the sacrifice which the lover had made her, when so cruelly ruined himself.

Weber bore up as best he could. At all events, his spirit was supported and encouraged by the enthusiastic joy, and the thousand testimonies of affection and regard, by which he was greeted in Prague. In public places, in walks, in shops, even strangers came to press his hand. Prague had learned his value by his loss. On the 20th of March his own "Sylvana" was given in his honour. He himself conducted; his Caroline played the part. The whole theatre was crammed, with a rare unanimity of feeling. The evening passed like a festivity in a family circle, in which two affianced lovers were playing the principal parts. "I conducted 'Sylvana' myself,"

wrote Weber to Gänsbacher; "I had only showed the top of my head in the orchestra, when an unearthly howl of applause broke loose and seemed to find no end. Every piece was applauded. At the end of each act cries of 'Bravo, Weber!' rang through the house. All went well. The orchestra and chorus were once more inspired with the old spirit, and played and sang as if electrified and intoxicated with joy. Oh, yes! they now feel what they have lost."

On the 1st of April Weber again left Prague. Madame Grünbaum had been secured provisionally. After a rest of two days at Dresden, he hurried over to Leipsic, where his cantata of "Kampf und Sieg" was to be produced for the first time. Leipsic was the very place where the principal scene of the great drama of the War of Liberation had been acted; and Weber, in accepting the proposition to conduct his own composition, counted upon an enthusiastic success. But either the excitement of political feeling had gone by, or the subject came home to many hearts too painfully. At all events, the performance found but a cold and indifferent public; and Weber quitted Leipsic the same night.

There were difficulties enough to struggle with at home. Several new singers were to appear on trial; among others Gned, an admirable basso, and Weber's favourite songstress Madame Grünbaum. Upon both the eager capellmeister had counted as most advantageous adjuncts to his deficient troop. But now again caprice, as well as intrigue, stood in the way of his legitimate hopes. Gned was received with every

mark of approbation by the public; and Weber, delighted to be able to secure so valuable and useful an addition to the German company, relied with confidence on his engagement. But a royal fancy came unexpectedly in his way. The King chose to imagine that the unlucky Gned bore a strong resemblance to a certain Geheim Rath von Anstetten, to whom, he opined, he owed all his unhappy position with the Allies, and the subsequent events, in which he had been treated almost as a political prisoner. The King could not endure the very sight of the new basso. Count Einsiedel immediately summoned Count Vitzthum to his presence to inform him that Majesty was uncomfortably moved by the appearance of the new singer. Vitzthum saw at once that the game was lost. To insist upon making Majesty uncomfortable at the German opera was tantamount to bringing the whole establishment into condign disfavour; and Weber, who thought he had already got his singing fish in his capellmeister's net, was obliged to let it go, with a sigh. Gned was engaged at Berlin. So also with Madame Grünbaum, who appeared as "Isabella" in "John of Paris" with indisputable success! "John of Paris was given last night," wrote Weber to Caroline, "and went admirably. The Grünbaum has turned all heads. In the second act she sang divinely. She was called out by general acclamation." But the never-failing intrigues against any accession of strength to the German opera, which might place it in better position to contest the palm with its powerful rival, were still

at work, and were once more successful. The engagement of Madame Grünbaum was not accorded; and she too found better appreciation in Berlin.

With active adversaries, always employed in manœuvres, great and small, to depreciate and misrepresent every action of the new German capellmeister, it is not very surprising to find a small but, according to modern ideas, necessary innovation brought against him, almost as a heinous crime. But any novelty was sufficient to bring down a cry of horror from the influential "pigtail" coteries of Dresden. Weber had actually the insolence to introduce the conductor's baton into the orchestra of Dresden. All earlier musical conductors in the Saxon capital had been accustomed to sit at the piano, after the Italian fashion, accompany the orchestra, and only mark the time in difficult passages by a wave of the hand. Any direct and immediate influence of the conductor was thus in a great measure nullified; and all delicacy of shading intended to be produced, and all support of the orchestra, were thus rendered a hundredfold more difficult to him. But what of that? The innovation, however useful, however necessary, was loudly decried as such. In vain Weber argued that, whatever the requirements of the Italian opera, German music demanded a more immediate influence on the part of the conductor. Such pretensions were ridiculed. Even among the members of the company, vocal and instrumental, grumblings were at first loud against a system which required a greater strain of attention on the part of the executants.

But Weber was not to be daunted in what he considered the right course in the interests of art. For never a moment did his activity flag; wherever improvement could be effected, there were brain and hand at zealous work. When a certain degree of due organisation had been established, the new capellmeister, with that feeling of order, amounting almost to formality, which he displayed in all he did, addressed to his manager, Count Vitzthum, a long and admirably written memorial, stating all the requirements indisputably necessary for the permanent establishment of a really effective German opera in Dresden. In this statement, in which the subject was fully exhausted in all its bearings, Weber strenuously urged the complete severance of the two operatic companies, except in very exceptional cases. A ballet-master, for the instruction of apprenticed children, and for the direction of effective groupings among the masses, he also pointed out as one of the requirements of an operatic stage. It was long, however, before any heed was given to the admirable suggestions of the zealous capellmeister, and before the German opera was allowed to rise in worth by the engagement of really eminent artists. His first and chief struggle was for the reform and reconstruction of the chorus. In these endeavours, at least, he had one strong ally—the singing-master, Johannes Miksch, a man of great ability and experience. True, the capellmeister and his ally did not always agree in principle and opinion. Miksch, although a German, was a pupil of the Italian school of music. He de-

clared that Weber did not rightly understand the capabilities of the human voice. Weber responded that Miksch treated voices too much as mere musical instruments, and forced them into unnatural conditions; and that thus, whilst under proper superintendence he was the greatest singing-master in the world, without it he was the murderer of all voices. But although the artistic disputes of the two men were violent, and sometimes, on the part of the singing-master, coarse and rude, yet each knew the other's value as an artist and worth as a man; and at all events Weber had here found a firm ally in his efforts to produce such excellence as was possible in the German opera.

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE OF THE RIVAL OPERAS.

In summer the whole character of the beautiful capital of Saxony is changed, and with it are the daily habits of its denizens. The stream of city life pours forth into the country, to flow around the pleasure-gardens and the villas of the neighbourhood. On any bright summer's night a stranger, who might look upon the illuminations of the public gardens, the lamps upon the bridge, and the variegated lanterns of the floating gondolas, all reflected in the sparkling river, and hear the music and song bursting in gusts on the still air, accompanied by the dull distant rolling of the many carriages hurrying along the valley of the Elbe to the lovely scenes without the city, might fancy that he was suddenly transported under a southern sky. In conformity with these habits, a small summer theatre was built, towards the close of last century, in the pretty gardens of a place of amusement on the river's banks, called, from the name of its proprietor, the "Linkèsches Bad." For many years this little theatre had been in the possession of

various managers; and during the earlier part of the century it had been the practice of the Royal Company of Comedians, under the directorship of Seconda, to give representations there during the summer months, alternately with the theatre royal. Never, however, had the Italian opera company been known to tread the boards of the little theatre. Such a proceeding had always been considered beneath its dignity, and even a matter of impossibility.

All at once Weber received instructions to produce "Das Waisenhaus," an opera already under study, on the boards of the summer theatre, and at the same time to hold himself ready to conduct some performances at the little court theatre in the château of Pillnitz. An enormous excitement was created by this order throughout all the theatrical world of Dresden and the theatre-loving public. It formed the general topic of conversation and discussion. It was very clear to men's minds that, if the Italian opera was not equally to receive royal orders to give representations at "the Bath," the position of the German opera was to be intentionally lowered. Of equal importance, in the tittle-tattle of the day, was the doubt whether the King would first summon the German or the Italian opera to play before the royal presence at Pillnitz. In popular opinion the royal decision on this point would determine the due position of the one or the other in the hierarchy of court etiquette. Now Weber was all the more determined to support the dignity of the establishment over which he presided, as he knew that in fact it was impossible

for him to struggle as yet against the Italians. For not one moment did he allow the grass to grow under his feet. Every thing he could devise was done to assert the due dignity of the Germans, and to receive the assurance that the Italians were equally to be commanded to play at "the Bath." The Italian party meanwhile was no less active in its struggles to avoid the "degradation," as it was termed. The two capellmeisters never left Count Vitzthum any rest. When the one went, the other came.

Seconda declared himself on the side of the Germans; and even Schmiedel, with the powerful influence of his brother (the royal head valet) at his back, took up the cudgels in their favour. On the other hand, Count Einsiedel's door always stood open to the Italians, the whole troop of whom, with their capellmeister at their head, assailed him incessantly with petitions and supplications. During the first days of this pitched battle of the operas, Count Vitzthum could give but little encouragement to his good Germans. The partisanship of the powerful minister in favour of the Italians was unquestionable. As fortune decided it, Count Einsiedel was confined for some days to his room by indisposition. The Pillnitz affair was urgent, as illustrious guests were expected at the château. Count Vitzthum was summoned to a personal interview with royalty on the subject; and the victory was won on the German side! The King himself decided that the Italians should sing at "the Bath" as well as the Germans; and when obstinate royalty had spoken, there was no appeal. It was a

slight attack of influenza, then, that decided the destiny of the budding establishment of German opera at Dresden.

Another cause contributed, at the same time, to the triumph of the German party. Morlacchi had committed the imprudence to style himself, on several public occasions, "First Capellmeister of his Majesty the King of Saxony." Of this presumptuous assumption Weber complained; and Morlacchi was forbidden to bear any more a title which had never been accorded him. In the eyes of the court and the public the Italian faction had thus sustained three most notable defeats. In vain did the Italians declare that it was simply for the sake of hearing Madame Grünbaum, who was on the point of departure, that the German opera was first invited to Pillnitz. Public opinion decided that a very important victory had been gained by the German company.

All was not completely won, however. As a drop of honey in the bitter cup of mortification, which had been drained by the Italians, they received their first royal command to sing at "the Bath" for the commemoration of the anniversary of the King's return to Saxony. Fioravanti's sparkling opera "Le Cantatrici Villane" was given. The Italian party made a strong pull, and mustered in great force. The first German opera at "the Bath" was scantily attended. And thus the honours of war were still divided between the two opposing armies, the one of which consisted of magnificent troops under a very indifferent general; whilst the other, comparatively weakly re-

cruited, was marshalled by the most energetic and genial of commanders.

From the whole tenor of his correspondence, at the time, it is very clear that Weber was sadly anxious and nervous as to the result of this first battle. One defeat, he confessed to himself, might ruin the cause of the German opera for ever. With his first success he was evidently elated. "When the King came in," he wrote to Caroline in describing the performance at Pillnitz, "he addressed me at once, and, as well as the Princes, was most pleasant in manner to me. The Queen's first words were for you. She bade me say all that was kind to you from her. . . . I cannot deny that I am enchanted, we should have been the first at Pillnitz, and not the Italians."

Spite all the efforts made not to sing at "the Bath," the representations given there were always parties of pleasure. The members of the companies were conveyed thither in gondolas; on sweet summer evenings the excursion was a treat. Frequently, persons who did not belong to the stage were permitted to join these quasi-Venetian water-parties; and the liveliest conversation ensued to the monotonous accompaniment of the splashing oars, whilst the shades of night fell on stream and mountain. Similar excursions were taken by the members of the literary circle, of which Weber was soon one of the brightest lights. Impromptu tales were told by the more genial members of the company on such occasions: and Weber's wit and humour flashed in the brightest coruscations; unless indeed a flood of melancholy, as

sometimes was the case, came over him at the setting of the sun. At other times the music of seductive serenades, arranged by the genial young capellmeister, whose guitar moved his hearers now to laughter, now to tears, floated over the waters of the Elbe. Weber took to his heart, on such excursions, the lovely scenes around; and an intense longing seized him to possess a pleasant little cottage, nestled in the vine-gardens, where he might dream away a few happy months. The feeling of yearning loneliness fell upon him again. Pleasant acquaintances he had in store, of "friends of the soul" not one. "You have a home where you can speak out your inmost thoughts," he wrote to his beloved, "where you can live, where you can joy with other's joy. But so it is not with me; I am alone. . . . When I have my little birdy in its nest, all will be bright once more. I shall want nothing then." So it was again, when his friend Lichtenstein begged him to be the godfather of his new-born little daughter. Weber accepted the responsibility with delight. But the pictures of domestic happiness, set forth in his friend's letters, combined with this oppressive sense of loneliness, fell heavily on his heart. He again urged, with all the energy in his power, the speedy celebration of his marriage. He stormed the young lady herself with tender importunities; he sought the intercession of his intended's father. But prudential counsels were always fighting the battle with love. Before marriage, as it was asserted, it was necessary that his provisional, and possibly temporary position should

be exchanged for one of perfect security. This drawback was all the more galling to the poor lover, as it was on the faith of a permanent life-long appointment alone, that he had accepted the offers of Count Vitzthum. All Weber's petitions and remonstrances, however, fell upon dull ears. The great minister, Count Einsiedel, insisted that a year's probation was necessary, according to all red-tape usage, before the bestowal of a permanent official place. But this position of affairs was soon considerably modified by a circumstance which might indeed have changed the whole direction of Weber's life.

On the 27th June, Capellmeister Augustin Gürlich died at Berlin; and on the same day, a letter was despatched by Brühl to Weber, to inform him of the fact, and offer him the vacant post. In Weber's state of mind at the time, this letter was like a spark falling on a powder-barrel. In a great state of excitement he consulted with Count Vitzthum. His honour, he was told, was engaged in the maintenance of his position at Dresden. But, on the other hand, there was an immediate security in the appointment offered at Berlin, which might at once effect the fulfilment of his fondest wishes. The struggle was a sore one. An immediate decision seemed impossible to him. He wrote in a temporising and undecided strain to Brühl. Just at this juncture, too, when a determination either to give up his Dresden appointment, or still hold on with courage and hope, was more and more urgently forced upon him, a complication of circumstances tended to put before him the

nature of his service, as a Saxon official, in the most unpleasant light.

It was in this wise. A concert was to be given in the Church of Notre Dame at Dresden, for the benefit of the destitute peasantry in the Hartz mountains. Count Vitzthum had appointed Weber as the arranger and conductor of this important concert; and the German capellmeister had selected for the principal feature, the great composition, "Vater Unser," to Klopstock's words, by Naumann. But Morlacchi had looked forward to the honour of conductorship on this occasion, with the hope of producing his own "Isacco," in the most splendid style; and, when the truth reached his ears, he burst into a storm of rage. All the favouritism bestowed on him by the court, all his influence in high circles, all his back-stairs connexion, were used by the wily Italian to turn out Weber. He was "primo maestro," he said; for he still chose to assert the title, in spite of Vitzthum's prohibition: and he was not to be gainsayed. It was not difficult for him to lure Cabinet-Minister Einsiedel, with all his power, into his own scale. Vitzthum was immediately summoned to the minister, and sharply desired to retract his arrangement: Vitzthum refused. Weber then received the minister's commands to appear before him, for the purpose of being compelled to resign the honourable mission intrusted to him. But Count Einsiedel must have been as weak in his knowledge of human nature, as he was deficient in diplomatic tact; for the very means he adopted to give Weber an imposing idea

of himself, and inculcate due bureaucratic rigidity, were the last to be employed with such a man. Weber was designedly made to wait an hour and a half in the great minister's anteroom. Just at the moment when Weber had resolved to depart, and on reaching home to write to Count Brühl accepting unconditionally the Berlin appointment, the door was opened to him. Weber entered the minister's cabinet with that cold proud air and stony look, with which, as his contemporaries relate, he was ever wont to meet all pretension and presumption, and declined, with respectful, but cutting words, to move one hair's-breadth from his rights. "My appointed service has been given me by my chief," he continued; "he alone can release me from it. But, should he do so, I shall give up my post on the spot." The minister stood petrified! No Saxon official had dared to speak thus to him before. And that this little man should have presumed to be—a man! It was incredible! The cabinet minister and the free-souled artist parted more sharply sundered from each other than before.

The affair came to the King's ears. Whatever his faults, the King was just. He decided that Weber was in the right, and should retain the conductorship of the concert; but that Count Vitzthum had acted incautiously, and ought to receive a reprimand. Weber was now doubly on his mettle to do honour to the important task which had been confided to him. The concert was arranged on the grandest scale. Every care was bestowed on the production of Naumann's composition. Weber could not be con-

tent with any excellence short of perfection. His aim was fully realised. The whole mass of singers and instrumentalists worked as one body inspired by his own ardent soul. He had the satisfaction of conducting the composition of the master, whom he so greatly admired, with a precision and a spirit, to which his Dresden public had been all unused; and as the crowds of delighted listeners poured out from the church, there was but one voice of congratulation and praise.

Weber had triumphed; but he had felt severely all the difficulties of the thorny ground on which he stood; and he still continued weighing in his mind the advantages and disadvantages of acceptance or rejection of the proffered position in a balance of doubt, which never ceased to sway from side to side. In his dilemma he appealed to the practical good sense and discernment of his beloved Caroline. With that spirit of accuracy and order, which presided over all his doings, as well as with his well-known sense of fairness, he laid the pros and contras of each position in debtor and creditor account to be summed up by his Egeria. Before, however, he could be inspired by the influence of the person, whose tact and discretion he trusted more than that of any creature in the world, Brühl pressed more and more imperatively for a decision; whilst, at the same time, with almost irresistibly attractive influences drawing him to Berlin, repulsive currents, almost as powerful, were tending to drive him away from Dresden.

The report that Weber was in negotiation with

the theatrical authorities in Berlin relative to the acceptance of a new capellmeister's post, although the secret had only been confided to Count Vitzthum, soon ran like wild-fire through the little city of busy-bodies, and reached, in an exaggerated and distorted form, the ears of the court. The indignation of the Saxon magnates was intense. That a capellmeister of his majesty the King of Saxony should presume to look out for a better position than that which he held in Dresden, and should actually be treating with a foreign court—and the Prussian too beyond all others!—was an impertinence not to be borne. The facts that a higher salary, a wider field of action, and securer prospects for his family were thereby offered to him, were, of course, not to be considered. "An Italian capellmeister," cried the Italian coterie, "has never dreamed of such vile ingratitude! This is the vaunted fidelity of the German! This is attachment to our royal house!" The hostility to the young German capellmeister was at its height.

To prove that the latter accusation at least was wholly unfounded, Weber resolved to show his sympathy and respect for the royal family by composing, in honour of the fête-day of the young daughter of Prince Maximilian, who had been lately affianced to the Hereditary Grand Duke of Tuscany, Princess Maria Anna Caroline, a charming cantata to words written by Kind. The manner in which this surprise was carried out before the princely family is told by Weber, in his usual pleasant style, in a letter to his Caroline. "After breakfast I drove out with our

good singers to Pillnitz. The princes were at breakfast when we arrived. Schneidel laid the words upon the table. The doors were opened; and our music began. The joy, the emotion, the surprise of the royal party were something indescribable. We were obliged to repeat the cantata; and I thought that all my singers were going to cry too. Then we were obliged to sing other things—my 'Tanz-Lied' among the number—till the whole party was in the merriest mood. Form and etiquette were wholly forgotten in the jubilee. As for expressions of gratitude and delight, there was no end of them." But all the more cheering the impression made on Weber's heart by the charming simplicity and amiability of the princely family, all the more disagreeable, by contrast, was that conveyed by the manners and talk of the court officials, with whom he was constrained to pass the rest of the day. "This day," he wrote in his diary, "which commenced so pleasantly and sympathetically in the society of those loveable princes and princesses, has more than ever determined me, as I see the dark games of intrigue played so shamelessly around me, wholly to leave this labyrinth of sneaking meanness." But the determination was vain. An unforeseen circumstance all at once closed the doors which Weber considered open before him, and by which he thought to escape from a state of things so utterly uncongenial to his honest nature. The Berlin theatre was burned down on the 31st July 1817; and shortly afterwards Brühl was obliged to inform Weber, with heavy heart, that

the King did not intend, under the circumstances, to fill up Gürlich's post for the present.

Nothing was left to Weber but to endure; and this endurance became doubly burdensome when the "sneaking meanness," of which he complained so bitterly, assailed, not only himself, but his respected chief, in the bitterest form. Morlacchi, whose fame had not failed to be trumpeted forth in all Italian journals by those manœuvres for which Italy was then famous, had received an offer to compose an opera for the theatre of San Carlo at Naples. During the period of his service as capellmeister at the court of Saxony, Morlacchi had contrived to spend nearly the half of his time under the sunny sky of his own country away from "that barbarian land." He seized the opportunity to require of Count Vitzthum a leave of absence for eight months! With this demand Vitzthum refused to comply. He pointed out that Weber had already obtained a two months' leave of absence for the sake of concluding his marriage, and that a three months' leave was all-sufficient for the purposes of the Italian capellmeister. Morlacchi stormed; but Vitzthum was determined; and, for the time, the Italian held his peace. But the Count was shortly compelled to visit a mineral bath for his health, leaving the operatic affairs in the hands of the respective capellmeisters. Such an opportunity was not to be missed. War was determined on.

What Vitzthum had refused, Morlacchi had no doubt he should obtain through Count Einsiedel, whose partiality for himself, detestation of the Ger-

man opera, and general ignorance in theatrical affairs, all combined to aid his purpose. True to his habits of intrigue, Morlacchi was not content, however, to obtain his desired leave from the minister in his chief's absence and behind his back. He well knew that Count Einsiedel's strict bureaucratic forms might lead him to refer the matter back to the general director. He was determined to prevent all communication between the two men; and, with this design, he attacked the absent Vitzthum by the most abominable calumnies, obtaining at the same time, from Count Einsiedel's partiality, the coveted leave of absence. What was the precise nature of these malicious accusations was never known even by Count Vitzthum. But whatever it might have been, the minister was furiously enraged, and the King also expressed himself against Count Vitzthum with unusual acrimony. Morlacchi's leave of absence had been accorded and sanctioned by the King the day before Count Vitzthum's return. Astounded at his chilling reception at his first audience of the King, still more thunderstruck by the unintelligible harsh words of the minister, the Count looked around for the cause. It soon became clear to him that he had been foully calumniated by Morlacchi. Once convinced, Count Vitzthum drew up a straightforward and manly report to the King, exposing the Italian's malice and his insubordination. It would appear that this report, frankly exposing the whole affair, never reached the royal cabinet. But the minister now became alarmed at the threatened exposure, sent for Vitzthum, over-

whelmed him with grandiloquent phrases, and promised him that Morlacchi's accusations should be duly protocoled and put on paper—a promise never fulfilled. More than ever indignant, Vitzthum insisted energetically upon obtaining an audience with the King—a demand to which the minister responded by assuring the Count that "really it was not worth the while, as no importance would be attached to what Morlacchi had said." The only concession that Vitzthum could obtain was the free permission to read Morlacchi an official lesson on his conduct. For some days the cunning Italian contrived to evade the orders to appear before his chief. When at last he could resist no longer, and was obliged to listen to the Count's merited objurgations, Morlacchi flew into a violent passion: he declared that he was insulted, and that the whole story against him was a fabrication. Again was the Count obliged to insist that Morlacchi should be severely reprimanded and put in his place by the minister. Nothing, however, was done. Morlacchi took every opportunity to display his insolence to the Count unpunished, and actually left Dresden on his basely obtained leave of absence, honoured by the favour of the court, and overwhelmed by pompous letters of introduction from the King. Weber was left to take upon himself the chief burden of his rival's labours, unthanked, unremunerated, unacknowledged. In the curious game of chess of the two operas at Dresden, the Italian had gained another move.

Count Vitzthum's mortification was so intense

that his health suffered from it materially. He even sent in his resignation, which was not accepted; but never for a moment did he neglect his duties towards the establishment over which he presided. He did more. He was determined that Weber, at all events, should not suffer; and he addressed to the King another and more urgent report in favour of Weber's appointment for life. This report, written with all the fulness of a warm and honest heart, and proving that, were it not for his attachment to the institution, which he hoped to raise to an eminent position in Dresden, Weber might find far more remunerative situations elsewhere, was at last successful. Weber received his appointment for life as Royal Capellmeister, with especial pecuniary advantages, and two months' annual leave of absence. It was on the 13th September 1817, that the royal decree was signed, which offered him for life a haven where his ship might lie at anchor, and which, in spite of several stormy voyages, it was never destined wholly to leave, until it sank for ever. It was fated, as may well be surmised from the past, to be attacked by powerful and influential enemies; and it was gallantly defended with courage, honour, and a true reverence for art.

Weber's creative powers had been very slightly tasked during all this doubtful and stormy period at Dresden. Two little songs, and some variations on a Polish air, done to order, were the only products of his genius. Of the former, one was perhaps the sweetest of all his Lieder: it has re-

mained one of the most popular to the present day. This was "The Violet," composed to words by Kind. But when Weber was securely ensconced behind the breakwater of a permanent position, whence he could more boldly struggle against all the stormy waves of hostility and intrigue which never ceased to sweep against him, his genius was enabled once more to soar aloft. Its summer sun was now to foster to full bloom and maturity those flowers which its spring-tide had only enabled to take root and blossom. The rose cannot bloom until the snowdrop and the daisy have raised their timid heads from the barely warmed earth. The harvest cannot bring its ample blessing until the showers of the early year have drawn forth its first blades: nor could Weber have written "Der Freischütz," had he not first sung his sweet Lieder, and warmed the hearts and souls of the German people by his "Leier und Schwert," and his "Kampf und Sieg." Through them he had reached his culminating point. He was now to stamp his close affinity with the very essence of the German nature. Beethoven, in his symphonies, had represented its soul in all its depths. Göthe, in his "Faust," had incorporated its intellectual spirit. Weber in his "Der Freischütz" sang forth its heart.

From the first moment that Weber took his new opera in hand, he may be said to have entered into the phase of his maturity. The very day may be marked (the 23d February 1817) when the first act of the opera reached him, and on reading it over, he felt "a spring of melody bubbling up within him."

From this moment his whole artistic being assumed the form of this work. From this moment his hitherto vague and general feelings of art were concentrated upon the one idea of "Der Freischütz." From the world without, as from the rich world of thoughts within, every thing was seized upon to be amalgamated with this one idea. Wherever he went he carried it in his heart. Every outward impression, however heterogeneous it may have appeared, was reflected on the one mirror within, wherein was to be judged the effect of light and shade it might produce. The work became a portion of himself. Naturally enough the love that then pervaded his whole being was absorbed at once into this incorporation of his art, and exercised a powerful influence on his work. In "Aennchen" Weber saw all the nature and qualities of his beloved one. He took her ideal form to his heart at once; and the portions of the opera in which it appears first ripened into musical life under the warm sun of his love. The first note of "Der Freischütz" which Weber ever wrote down belonged to the duett between Aennchen and Agathe, in the second act. As Weber himself has frequently declared, he not only saw his Caroline before him, carrying out all his artistic intentions in a part which so thoroughly accorded with her peculiar talents; but he could hear her singing every note of the music, as she would sit studying at the piano, now shaking her head over some passage, now smiling pleasantly over some other, until these visions of his brain dictated all the effects of his composition.

Weber did not compose "Der Freischütz;" he allowed it to grow out of the rich soil of his brave German heart, and to expand leaf by leaf, blossom by blossom, trained, tendered, fostered by the hand of his talent; and thus no German looks upon the opera as a work of art, which penetrates him from without: he feels as if every tone of the work came from his own heart, as if he himself had dreamed it so, and it could no more sound otherwise than the rustling of an honest German beech-wood. This very feeling was involuntarily expressed by Kind, when he so innocently exclaimed, "I cannot see what there is in the melody of 'The Bridesmaids' Chorus' to make such a woindrous fuss about! Why, from the very words, it could not have been otherwise. Every man would have hit upon the same idea."

Weber was much longer employed on the composition of his "Der Freischütz" than on that of any other of his operas. From the first beginning, on the 23d February, of his mental work on it, which never ceased to the 2d July, the first day that he wrote down a note of it, an interval of more than four months took place. There is not a single piece of music in it that he did not turn over twenty times in his mind, until he so felt it that he could say, "That's it!" and then he wrote it down rapidly in a firm clear hand, almost without altering a note. Thus in none of his works does the peculiar speciality of the style and manner of his creation appear so markedly as in this one. He may be said to have been always composing. The world appeared to him

a world of tones. Colour, form, space, time were transformed, by a mysterious process of his inward man, into sounds. Out of the strangest and most unharmonious noises his ear sucked in the most original and striking effects. Strange to say, lines and forms seem to have called forth melodies within him, as sounds gave rise to harmonies. His musical ideas, he was wont to say, came thickest upon him when the sight of outward objects was accompanied by the rolling of carriage-wheels. Landscapes were symphonies to his ears; and melodies sprang up from every rise or fall of the road, from every trembling brook, from every waving field of corn; whilst the sound of the wheels supplied the richest harmonies. Thus certain drives or walks were involuntarily mixed up in his mind with such or such musical ideas. Whenever any spot recurred to his memory, it was combined with the recollection of the melody it had inspired. But, happy as might be the ideas thus elicited by outward objects, Weber was slow to write them down. Experience had taught him that such musical inspirations might, like poetical improvisations, strike upon the ear with brilliant and startling effect, yet fall upon the paper dead and cold, like shooting-stars. Weber, however, was no lavish spendthrift of his ideas. Portions of these fleeting musical apparitions, to which he assigned no greater value, and which he considered unworthy of being stored up, he would reproduce in his inimitable improvisations on the piano; and, as he played, he would unroll before his mind's eye the

landscape panorama whence the musical thoughts had sprung.

But it must not be supposed, at the same time, that the nature of the outward objects always elicited analogous feelings. Sublime mountain scenery, by some strange chain of thought, or perhaps contrasting feeling, might give birth to a droll capriccio,—a joyous sunrise to a melancholy adagio,—a grotesque object to a grave motivo. After this fashion, the "Laughing Chorus" of the first act of "Der Freischütz" owed its origin to the impression made upon the composer by the intolerably false intoning of the responses of a litany by some old women, during a sleepy afternoon-service in the Pillnitz chapel. The music of the Wolf's Glen was conceived one morning as he drove to Pillnitz in a heavy fog, the changeful masses of which swept in multitudinous forms around his carriage. The magnificent march in "Oberon," it may here be related, also owed its existence to a still more singular apparition. Weber was accustomed, when performances took place at the "Linkesches Bad," to walk out after dinner and take his coffee there in the garden by the Elbe. One day a heavy rain had come on during the walk, to the capellmeister's infinite disgust. He was unusually silent and morose. When he reached the garden, all the guests had been driven away by the rain, and the waiters had heaped the chairs and tables one upon another, with their legs sprawling in the air. The capellmeister stood for a time, with his hands folded behind him, gazing at the grotesque group-

ings of these distracted-looking objects. All on a sudden he called to young Roth, the clarionette-player, who had been the companion of his walk, "Look there!" he said; "does not that look exactly like a great triumphal march? Donnerwetter! What chords there are for the trumpets! I can use that! I can use that!" He had just then been asked to compose a march for Gehe's tragedy of "Henry the Fourth." Immediately on reaching home, after the theatre, Weber wrote down his singular inspiration, at first only for brass instruments. It was afterwards turned to account, and arranged for the orchestra in "Oberon."

To such strange outward impressions, and their mysterious workings upon Weber's artist soul, was due the music of that opera, which, of all his works, was the most characteristic of his own nature. His own feelings, during its composition, he expressed but seldom in word or writing. To his beloved Caroline, almost exclusively, he opened his mind upon the subject occupying all his thoughts. "I have such a terrible confession to make to you," he wrote one day, "I scarcely know how to come out with it. I am completely seduced by the charms of a young maiden; and the crime is all the more abominable, as she is another's bride. But I can't help it. She is always in my thoughts. Day and night I embrace her with the wildest passion. She came naked to me; but I am dressing her with the best I can supply, and feeding her with my own heart's blood. She has a dreadful longing for the

stage; and I shall forward her desire as much as I can, although I know all the dangers which threaten her. Oh! will she be true to me? Now you know all. Beat me! tear out my eyes! But that will do no good. Yes, that perfidious 'Jäger's Bride' haunts me wherever I go. Heaven grant her and me its blessing!" "Every thing which has any connexion with my own dear Lina goes before all," he writes again. "Aennchen would suit you exactly; and I cannot but compose those portions of my music first, wherein you come before my eyes. In that merry coquettish little demon you will, one of these days, find your own portrait, my little mouse." "The great work before me terrifies me sometimes," he writes once more; "and with all the labours of my office, my correspondence, and the direction of the German and Italian operas, and the church music too, how can I ever hope to complete it?" "I have had a few happy moments," runs another letter; "and I have played several passages of my music to Kind, who does not seem by any means pleased. But that does not matter much. Poets only want to hear their own words. But what will my public with two eyes say? Will that be pleased? That's the important point. Now I'll have a good run round my room, and see whether any thoughts will come." "If I have only my first act ready before—you know what—I shall have you to help me in the others," sighs the composer in another letter; "and then we'll see whether we cannot patch it up together, and have it produced

this winter. You'll aid me in cutting out and sewing my bride's petticoat for her, won't you?" "I have been working hard," he writes in August; "principally upon Agathe's scene; but I cannot get the glow and passion which should be hers." "Oh! my good Jäger's Bride," he writes another time; "come quick and bring me gold in store, that I may provide all sorts of beautiful things for my own, my real bride, and line her nest with every comfort." This period of his work on the "Jäger's Bride" ends with the year 1817. The ductt of Agathe and Aennchen, the air of Agathe, and a portion of the ensemble piece between Max, Cuno, and Chorus were then composed. It was not until the end of the following year that he again appears busily employed upon his opera.

Weber's time, indeed, was now more than fully taken up by the various demands made, both socially and artistically, upon his every moment. During the summer months a stream of wandering strangers was continually pouring through the now animated city. Day by day came old friends from Berlin, from Munich, from all parts of Germany, whose claims upon his kindness and attention Weber could not resist. Excursions were to be made in the lovely country around. Popular festivities allured to unwonted merriment. Literary personages were to be inducted into the dull mysteries of "the Poets' Tea." Time was ruthlessly robbed from Weber, as though it had not been one of his most precious treasures. At this very juncture, too, his official

duties were complicated and increased to a distracting degree. Not only were heavy operas to be studied and rehearsed, in order to support and increase the reputation of the new German establishment, upon the due furtherance of which he had staked his reputation and fixed his whole heart; but from the fact of Morlacchi's absence, the additional obligations of conducting all the church music, and the royal "table music," fell exclusively to his charge as royal capellmeister. The former alone was sufficient to absorb all the attention of any one conductor. Twice on all Sundays and high holidays was the full choir expected to perform in the Catholic church of the Court. The Lenten and Easter music was a Herculean task in itself alone. The so-called "table music," during the royal dinner, which was then in full force according to the strictest old court etiquette, had to be conducted by the capellmeister himself, with all the available vocal and instrumental means of the royal "capelle," amidst the clattering of plates and glasses, and the chattering of the diners. This antiquated ceremony called for less immediate exertion; but, to the intense annoyance of every one, it had to be carried out in full court dress. It may here be mentioned, as highly characteristic of Weber's strong and conscientious feelings, that, before entering upon his new functions as director of the church music, he conceived it necessary, in order to appear pure and worthy for his duties in the Temple of the Lord, to confess and take the sacrament.

Amidst the confused mass of business which was now heaped upon him, Weber, at the same time, had to steal scanty leisure moments, how and when he could, not only to attend to household cares, but to use his productive powers upon a new composition, which circumstances had forced upon him. The finishing touches were to be given to the future home of his beloved Caroline — the nest he was building for his chirpy mate, he called it. He was obliged to work in a manner scarcely comprehensible, amidst the noise of hammers, planes, and saws, and the distracting confusion of upholsterers, cabinet-makers, carpenters, painters, and charwomen. So completely had all comfort been driven from the house, that, for many nights, he was compelled to sleep in the kitchen, where he could scarce find room for the little work-table, on which his new task was to be achieved.

Court intrigues had, as usual, presided over the birth of this composition. The marriage of the daughter of Prince Max with the hereditary Grand Duke of Tuscany was to be celebrated early in the autumn. A musical fête in the theatre was considered, according to old standing usage, an indispensable requisite on such an occasion; and an Italian Festival Cantata had been written by Celani for Morlacchi's composition. But Morlacchi was gone, and paid no heed to such occasional loyalty. The whole affair was left in the hands of Weber. It had been Count Vitzthum's honest desire, that, under the circumstances, the whole festive prepara-

tion should be imbued with a thoroughly German character. Kind was engaged to write fresh words in German. The poetry of the cantata was soon ready; composer, scene-painter, and costumier were all already employed upon this occasional work, when Count Einsiedel again interfered, with his usual prejudice and arrogance, and declared that Italian opera, and Italian divertissement were alone to be considered acceptable for the royal festivity. So Weber, hurried, hampered, worried as he was by all his multifarious work, was compelled, in the small remaining space of one fortnight, to compose a new cantata to the cold pedantic words of the Abbé Celani. He set to his work, however, with his customary energy and zeal, although, as has been seen, under the most spirit-deadening circumstances. He even succeeded in exciting himself to a certain pitch of inspiration in portions of the composition, by seizing upon the dramatic element of the occasion, apart from the dull phraseology of the words. His labours progressed far more pleasantly and rapidly than he had anticipated: and by the 8th October he was able to summon all the best resources of both the Italian and German companies to a rehearsal of his Festival Cantata, entitled "L' Accoglienza," with all its choruses, ensemble pieces, airs, and recitatives.

The wedding of the princess was delayed, however, from day to day, to the despair of Weber, who was thus detained in Dresden when on the point of starting for Prague for his own marriage. This con-

tinued postponement of his own happiness drove him wild with impatience. One day, when at Pillnitz, he met the two princes, Max and Anton, walking by the river-side. "Hollo, Weber!" cried the latter, in his usual hearty fashion; "when is your marriage coming off?" The expectant bridegroom answered, with a sigh, that it could not be until the court festivities were over. "Oh dear! oh dear!" exclaimed Prince Max, with kindly sympathy; "then it's all my fault! Well! well! I'll see that the affair comes off soon—very soon." Still, however, the royal marriage was delayed. But Weber whiled away the interval in his household affairs, made trials of his new cook, and got his gastronomic friend Bassi to give his judgment; filled his store-room, and weighed out his own tea and coffee; arranged his marriage-tour, and, at the same time, worked away at the organisation of his new chorus.

The marriage of the young princess took place at last upon the 29th of October, by proxy; and on the same evening Weber's Italian cantata, "L'Accoglienza," was produced at the theatre, in the presence of the whole court, and of the distinguished guests invited for the occasion, along with Mozart's "Titus," which Vitzthum and Weber had contrived to smuggle upon the boards, under its Italian title, as an Italian opera. The subject of the cantata contained a singular mixture of allegorical personifications of Science, Art, Commerce, and Agriculture, along with happy denizens of Florence, welcoming the princess to her new residence. Not a trace of any real dra-

matic feeling was to be found in it; and the poor composer was left to invent any lyrical beauties that an uninspired imagination could grasp. What Weber had done with his uncongenial material was almost marvellous under the circumstances. A beautiful quartett, with solo pieces for the allegorical personages, opened the cantata. A great air for the genius of Florence followed. Clouds dispersed, and discovered a panorama of the capital of Tuscany. A solemn chorus, chiefly founded on national melodies, was sung by the welcoming citizens, and closed with a brilliant allegro, into which Weber had poured his whole powers of invention in inspiring melody and harmony. The effect of this finale was such, that even a Dresden audience burst the bounds of all etiquette, and actually cried "Bravo!" in a tumult of enthusiasm, no less than might have done any ill-bred, revolutionary public, contemptuous of due court decorum. The King himself, on the very next day, sent a rich diamond-ring to Weber, in token of his august satisfaction.

Now at last Weber thought himself free to fly, with unfettered spirit, to his lovely betrothed. Not so. On the very day intended as that of his departure for his own marriage, when all was ready for his journey, Kind burst into his room, to tell him that the German cantata, the "Weinberg an der Elbe," was also to be forthwith composed. With naught but thoughts of love in his head, irritated by the long delays, mad with impatience, Weber had to find new inspiration, invent new melody. But the royal com-

mand was imperative. The composition was promised for the sixth of November; and it must be presumed that his new work was entirely composed in his travelling-carriage. It was completed on the very eve of his wedding-day, every note having been wrung with pain out of a heart filled to overflowing with far other thoughts.

With the feelings of a bird escaped from its cage, Weber at last rolled out of the city-gate on his way to Prague. Already overworked and overexcited by the events of the last few weeks, he felt his physical powers severely taxed by his hurried journey. From stage to stage his restlessness and impatience so much increased, that, while yet some miles from Prague, he was in a state of high fever. The thought struck him at the last post, that he should arrive smitten down by illness. But as he drove up to the last post-house, he heard a little cry of joy. In another moment his beloved was in his arms. Accompanied by her mother, she had come to meet him on his way. The fever was forgotten. His heart was at rest now; and the remainder of the journey was performed without one thought of illness.

In Prague Weber was received by his old friends with an enthusiasm of delight. All crowded around him to wish him joy in this, the most important step of his whole life. The four days which preceded that of his wedding were passed in a tumult of happy bewilderment. He, whose contest for every earthly good-fortune had been so hardly fought, held now within his grasp that prize for which, for seven long

years, he had fought the hardest and most painful fight of all. The wedding-day was fixed for the 4th of November, the fête-day of the affianced pair.

It was with feelings of seriousness and reverence, however, that Weber took this weighty step in life. At early dawn he confessed, took the sacrament with his betrothed, and then retired for an hour of religious communion with himself. These duties done, he mixed among his friends with happy heart, drove with his nuptial presents to his charming bride, and then to the church of St. Henry, accompanied by witnesses and friends. The church was crowded in every part with residents in Prague, all anxious to show their sympathy with the man who had earned their admiration and respect. As the organ pealed forth during a magnificent chorus, supported by the whole operatic troop, the master of all harmony knelt by the side of his bride, as if overwhelmed with that flood which he was accustomed to dominate, and mastered in turn by his profound emotion. The bond was tied. Weber and his beloved Caroline were man and wife; and never was happier union solemnised. The earnestness with which Weber took upon himself the duties of a married man, is clearly shadowed forth by his entry in his diary of this important day. "May God bless our union," he writes, "and grant me power and strength to make my beloved Lina as happy and contented as my inmost heart would desire! May His mercy lead me in all my doings!"

On the following day the "happy pair" set forth

on their matrimonial tour, through Eger, Baireuth, Bamberg, Wurtzburg, and Heidelberg, to Manheim, where they arrived on the 14th of November. In the latter place Caroline once more met her father, from whom she had been long parted, and whom she was destined never to see again. Her mother had accompanied the newly-married couple on their journey thus far, and here separated, with heavy heart, from her daughter, to remain with her husband and son Louis. The poor old woman could never persuade herself that her child's true ends and aims in life had not been sacrificed by her marriage with Weber. Her daughter's talent she prized immeasurably high, whilst never comprehending the true worth of her son-in-law. In her eyes her child had been lowered by such a match. She could scarcely regard as any compensation the pension of 100 thalers, which Weber duly paid her up to the hour of her death.

One of the chief events which the bridegroom had looked forward to on his journey, had always been his meeting with Gottfried Weber, his best and oldest friend, who had been lately transferred as state procurator to Mayence. But the anticipated meeting was far from realising the expectations Carl Maria's affectionate heart had raised. No efforts made on either side could fully establish the long-broken tie of friendship. The two men found themselves estranged by the different views of life and art which each had fostered during the separation; and they parted coolly. In a letter to Gänsbacher on the subject, Weber wrote: "Manheim was the saddest point

in all my journey. I came to Gottfried with the old heart full of the old affection; and he—he was no longer the same. I will not be unjust, however. He was daily occupied by his duties at the criminal assizes, and many other—too many other—matters. His wife too had just been confined. Beyond the sphere of self he seemed to have no thought. In short, I was all the more deeply pained, as I had looked forward to our meeting as the principal joy of all my journey. Well, all joys cannot be realised."

Other matters, however, claimed attention beyond this heart's disappointment. Concerts had to be given, to cover, in some degree, the expenses of the journey. Count Vitzthum, it is true, had placed a portion of these expenses to the charge of the theatre, by bestowing upon Weber a commission to beat up available instrumental and vocal recruits for the German opera; although in all the towns visited during this excursion little was to be found which could suit the purpose either of director or capellmeister. For the purpose of these concerts Darmstadt was the first town to which Weber bent his steps. By the assistance of his friends a concert was arranged, and took place on the 1st of December. Spite of the announcement of the great Körner songs, however, the pecuniary result was but moderate. Weber now bethought him of the little university of Giessen, where some years previously he had been received with so much honour and such profuse hospitality. So to Giessen he went; and there, on the 5th, a concert was given, which proved far more remunerative. Caroline, al-

though she had now left the stage, was not interdicted by matrimonial treaty from singing in concerts. At Giessen her charming and animated style roused the enthusiasm of the oldest professors as of the youngest students, even throwing her husband's playing into the shade; and when the young pair sang some of Weber's liveliest comic songs together, to the accompaniment of piano and guitar, the concert became one universal jubilee.

But the weather now began to be severe, and home and rest were in the hearts of both. Weber, however, could not resist the desire to visit both Gotha and Weimar, in order to present his lovely bride to his kind patron the Duke of Gotha, and his equally friendly protectress the Grand Duchess of Weimar. From both the young couple received tokens of that amiability and kindly feeling which characterised these illustrious allies of art. Nor could Weber deny himself the pleasure of greeting the tragic author, Müllner, then in the zenith of his somewhat exaggerated reputation, and self-styled the "Napoleon of the Stage," on his way through Weissenfels. By pen the two men had already fought a literary duel over the nature of stage music; but they had never come together. Spite of the contest of the past, they met in friendliness and mutual respect. Nor could Leipsic be passed without presenting the sweet bride to friend Rochlitz. But on they flew. Dresden was at last reached, on the 20th December; and the young wife entered, with beating heart, her new house, her future home.

One of Weber's great delights was to give surprises. With this intention he had allowed his bride to remain in the delusion, that she would find every thing in dire disorder. Instead of all the confusion anticipated, she saw elegant and comfortable rooms, in which nothing had been forgotten which even a woman's tenderest care could have provided, even to the cheerful flower-stands; a kitchen, for which the great composer of "Lyre and Sword" had himself bought every requisite, every dish, every pot, every saucepan—even when occupied by his "Der Freischütz;" a well-filled larder, in which the dinner of the day was duly provided; a richly-stocked cellar, and a friendly cook, curtseying ready for her orders. Caroline was in ecstasies, and fell upon her husband's neck to thank him, with a flood of tears, for all his care, for all his forethought, for the happiness and comfort he had bestowed. Every wish of the young careful "Hausfrau" had been anticipated, and fondly gratified. The Christmas of the young couple was one domestic jubilee. But in formal, ceremonious Dresden countless visits were to be paid. Every where the liveliness, the amiability, and the modesty of the young bride took all hearts by storm. No wonder that Weber was flattered, proud, supremely happy.

"No man can appreciate more deeply the worth of the happiness heaven has bestowed on him," he wrote to Lichtenstein. "A bright, joyous temper now heals all the wounds of a long-tortured spirit. This sympathy with my joys and sorrows is a prize with which nothing can compare. All regret for her lost

artistic life has been utterly quenched in my good Lina. It now seems to her like an incomprehensible dream. A woman's truest vocation in happy domesticity seems all she cares to live for now."

Thus closed for Weber the year, which had brought him the two greatest prizes of his life, and advanced him to the desired summit, as man and as artist. In his beloved wife he found the completion of himself—in his composition of "Der Freischütz" the path to the highest pinnacle of his artistic fame. Fully impressed with this feeling, he sat in the late hours of the night of the 31st December to write in his diary the words: "The great important year has closed. May God still grant me the blessing, which He has hitherto so graciously accorded me; that I may have the power to make the dear one happy, and, as a brave artist, bring honour and advantage to my Fatherland! Amen!"

CHAPTER IV.

WEBER'S LIFE AND TROUBLES IN DRESDEN.

But all was not destined to be happiness. At the commencement of the year 1818, Weber was made to feel one of the deepest and bitterest, and, at the same time, most unmerited mortifications which had ever overwhelmed him during his life as artist. Upon the very assumption of his duties as conductor in Dresden, he had become painfully aware that the orchestra was so arranged as to render it impossible for him to direct, as capellmeister, with any immediate and complete influence upon an operatic representation in its totality. A portion of the oblong space, which formed the Dresden orchestra, was continued under the proscenium boxes occupied by the Court. In the one recess so formed, under the box allotted to the princes on the left, was the staircase which led from the orchestra below the stage; in the other, beneath the box of the King, on the right, were crammed together the trumpets, horns, cymbals, and other instruments, composing, what was then called, the "Turkish music." From the depths of this re-

cess it was impossible for these instruments to produce their due effect—equally impossible for the executants to catch a glimpse of the conductor, who sat upon a stool before the piano in the middle of the orchestra; and the consequence was, that the most disagreeable impression was frequently produced by these noisy instruments. The position of the conductor, moreover, had the disadvantage of isolating him from the stage, and thereby disabling him from duly supporting the singers, following with any nicety what was going on in the representation, or giving any indications to the prompter, or any signals behind the scenes.

Such an arrangement had been endurable enough for the specialities of the Italian opera, weak in orchestral instrumentation and choral effects, and calling principally for immediate attention only to the execution of the solo voices. But for Weber, who was accustomed to direct the dramatic as well as musical ensemble of an opera, by a nod of his head, a glance of his eye, or a movement of his baton, and command and animate not only the effects of the individual singers, but his far more developed orchestra, the more purely dramatic business of the stage, and every characteristic detail of a lyrical stage production, the hindrances of the subsisting arrangement were almost insupportable. The position of many of the other instruments was equally detrimental to the effect he strove to produce. A violoncello and bass, for instance, sat immediately behind the conductor, and were expected to read out of his own score, being

thus themselves hampered in their reading by his continual movements, and destroying in turn, by their loud tones, all subtle nicety of ear in the capellmeister, and facility of detecting faults. Equally destructive to general effect was the confused and unpractical disposition of most of the other instruments. After studying the result produced by the existing arrangement for full eight months, so as to avoid all accusation of prejudice, but only to be more strengthened in his conviction of its thorough unsuitability to his purposes, he resolved to effect a sensible and advantageous change, with as small trouble and cost as possible. Little did he think, when taking this resolve, how painfully he was to be taught the lesson, that no one must dare to touch the time-honoured customs of any court institute in Dresden, however bad they may have been, unless indeed supported by special favour.

His first trial had been made on the production of his own cantata for the nuptial festivities of the young princess. On this occasion he had pushed up his own desk close to the prompter's box, upon which he could now give tapping signals, and thereby also acquired the possibility of seeing the musicians in their cramped position in the recess under the royal box. Changes had been made also, the principal dispositions of which had been to place the leading violins immediately on his right, with the other lighter stringed instruments on the same side, the violoncellos and basses at his back, and the wind-instruments on his left. So quietly had his measures been taken,

with Vitzthum's connivance, that, during the enthusiasm of the festive occasion, the important changes in the arrangement of the orchestra had never been remarked. But when, on Weber's return, he continued his new dispositions, the King, at a representation of Spontini's "Vestalin," was struck with the altered appearance of the orchestra, and expressed his great dissatisfaction with the change, all the more as the horns, the tones of which were no longer deadened beneath his box, offended his royal ear. Count Vitzthum was immediately summoned to the royal presence, to receive the royal expostulations. It is just possible that, after all, the affair might have been dropped, and the innovations conceded, as had been the case, when alterations in orchestral arrangements had been accorded to Morlacchi, for the highly favoured Italian opera. But unfortunately an article, written by Fräulein aus dem Winkel, Weber's old enemy, had appeared in the *Abendzeitung*, strongly condemning the new arrangements; and Weber, always too hasty, when his musical honour was attacked, had defended his innovations by another article, in which neither bitterness or biting wit were spared. Still more unfortunate for the German capellmeister were the words, "The old mistakes are no longer endurable among musicians of the present day, certainly not in Germany and France, and scarcely even in Italy," which were to be found in the imprudent notice. The whole Italian coterie was immediately up in arms against Weber. The irritated tone of his article might possibly have been overlooked;

but the implied insult to good old customs, and the time-honoured glories of the Saxon court in connexion with the established forms of its Italian opera, was one not to be pardoned. Count Einsiedel expressed his indignation loudly; and, on the 21st January, Weber received, through Count Vitzthum, who came to him in a state of great agitation and annoyance, the curt but stringent order, "For the future, and on all occasions, the orchestra must preserve the arrangement which has hitherto been customary."

The blow had been a severe one to both. Both considered themselves lowered by this order in the eyes of the public: according to this view, the authority of both, over their own subordinates, had thereby been weakened and almost destroyed. At Count Vitzthum's request, Weber addressed him an official exposition of the urgent necessity of the changes made. In a musical and thoroughly artistic sense, nothing could be more convincing than Weber's lucid arguments in favour of his alterations, and in proof of the impossibility of producing certain important operas under the old system, in a manner so as to satisfy the due requirements of "so distinguished a connoisseur as the all-gracious Monarch." In his advocacy of his own right, both as man and artist, Weber was no less decided. "After all the time and energy I have devoted to the royal service," he wrote, "it is infinitely painful to me to receive an order which, at the same time, disapproves of a portion of my endeavours, and weakens the whole sphere of my exertions—an order, which is doubly mortifying to

me, inasmuch as hitherto no capellmeister has been obstructed in any arrangements of the kind—an order, which wounds me all the more, as I cannot hope, after such a blow to my authority, and such a signal expression of dissatisfaction in the highest quarters, to preserve the due respect and influence which in my position I ought to command." This paper concluded with a petition on the part of Weber to his Majesty to be allowed to retain the orchestral arrangement he had made, in compliance with his own convictions of their necessity. To this document Count Vitzthum appended a letter, in which he defended all the German capellmeister's representations on every point, and concluded by supplicating the King to withdraw the order which had been so injurious to himself as well as to Weber. But it was through the hands of Count Einsiedel alone that such papers were allowed to reach the royal cabinet. It was necessary, therefore, that they should be addressed to the minister; and so to the minister they were addressed, with a letter, in which the Count placed the whole position of affairs before the all-influential man, in a manner as free-spoken as it was eloquent. But such a style could awaken no other feelings in a man, who could never understand how a well-informed gentleman could address his superior in a tone of honesty and truth, but those of indignation and annoyance. Count Einsiedel was more irate than ever; and there is every reason to suppose that the memorials were never laid before the King. On the very same day, Vitzthum received as reply, the re-

newed order that the orchestra should be immediately placed on its old footing.

Deeply wounded, and painfully embittered, as both the men might be, they had nothing to do but to obey. But there was still a drop of sugar in their bitter cup. On the very next day the order was published, and hung up, "by command," in the theatre; and, far from seeing themselves lowered in the eyes of "his Majesty's servants" in the establishment, they found themselves surrounded by the whole troop with every mark of respect. Every body had been convinced of the worth of the new arrangement; and even subaltern court officials, generally accustomed to express nothing but acquiescence in the feeblest tones, dared to speak aloud their dissatisfaction with the reversal of an innovation in every respect so advantageous. As another result of this battle, in which the German opera had suffered so disastrous a defeat, may be reckoned the fact that, from this evil hour, the bond of friendship between Weber and his honourable honest chief was tied still faster than before. There is no doubt that Weber's mortification was bitter on this occasion. Nevertheless he wrote to his friend Rochlitz on the subject: "I have determined to bear all as lightly as possible, and to care but little whether I stand a step higher or lower in favour, provided I can cherish the conviction that I deserve the topmost."

It was impossible, in a town so given to court tittle-tattle as Dresden was at the period, for the impression made upon the general public by the royal

order not to reach the minister's ears; and it appears probable that his colleague Nostitz spoke seriously with him on the subject. Now public opinion was for once decidedly in favour of the man thus deeply humiliated by the Court. With all his contempt for those beneath him, Count Einsiedel could never bear the idea that he was regarded in public as having done "the wrong thing;" and it was evident that in this case the contemptible public had dared to hold this opinion. So, without compromising himself with the Monarch, he now took every opportunity of assuring Weber of the King's complete satisfaction with his conductorship; and he coupled with this assurance the remark that, if the German capellmeister would carry out only just some little portion of his innovation, the fact might be overlooked. This suggestion Weber at first rejected with indignation; by Count Vitzthum's advice, however, and for the sake of the good cause, he ultimately adopted it, without eliciting any further remark. It may here be recorded, that in consequence of this counsel, and of the express desire of the Queen in the year 1820, the whole of Weber's orchestral arrangements were ultimately carried out, and even adopted for the greater part by Morlacchi for the Italian opera.

By this apparent change in the disposition of the minister, Count Vitzthum was perhaps induced, sooner than was prudent probably, to carry out an intention which he had long had deeply at heart. He made the attempt to bring from above so bright a gleam of supreme favour upon Weber, that the mortified mu-

sician might receive it as a full compensation for his mortification.

Fifty years ago orders and decorations had a far different significance from what they now have in Germany. They were seldom given, except to superior merit, or at least for presumed service. It was Vitzthum's greatest desire to obtain such a distinction for Weber. He once more sent in a memorial of all the capellmeister's services—his creation of the German opera, his unrequited fulfilment of all Morlacchi's duties during the absence of the latter, his exertions upon the marriage of the Princess,—services for which another would have been richly remunerated, but for which Weber had only been repaid by bitter mortification. "No customary present," he wrote, "can recompense such a distinguished man for all he has endured." He solicited an order already bestowed upon other eminent artists. "It cannot be indifferent to the King," continued Vitzthum, "to know that such a servant is influenced more by feelings of honour than of egotism, and sets far more store by a royal order than any remuneration." But thus far Count Einsiedel did not think it necessary to go. The alleged reason for a refusal was the short time of Weber's service in Saxony: the more real one may be found in the fact that an order, founded on the King's return to his dominions, could never, in the minister's estimation, be presented to a composer who, in his best-known musical works, had celebrated a victory over his Majesty's friends and allies. On the 12th of April, Count Einsiedel an-

nounced that he had presented the petition, but "without success, although his Majesty deigned to present the Herr von Weber with a ring, in token of the value he placed on his services." Vitzthum, in turn, demanded a more public satisfaction for a public mark of disfavour; and, when all his efforts were vain, again offered his own resignation as general director of the theatre, inasmuch as "the measures he proposed were not accorded, and no due consideration was paid to his conduct of affairs." The resignation was again not accepted.

It is pleasant to find that, during all this period of continued irritation, annoyance, and mortification, Weber's artistic activity was not crushed. From the 4th of January to the 1st of March he was occupied with one of his most important works—his great Mass in E flat. Fortunately Weber possessed the important faculty, without which no man can become great, of shutting out the world and all its burdens when he closed the door of his study. Still more, he possessed a door in his own brain, which closed of its own accord when he proceeded to commune with his own genius. Whenever he took his music-paper before him, whether in reality or in spirit, and listened to the song his genius sang, all was forgotten, even to that most fatal and most unfortunate of all tormenting demons—anger. Later still in life, in days of the bitterest suffering, when each moment the pulse threatened to beat its last, some of his freshest melodies streamed forth from the inexhaustible fountain of his brain, and creations, the furthest from all

clogging earthliness, sprang into existence. Yet, as regards his Mass, it is undeniable that Weber's special tendencies were as little predisposed to religious as to chamber music. His chief element of creative power—his fire, his rhythmical swing, the irresistible feeling, which stamped him as a dramatic composer—could only find secondary employment in his abstract contemplation of a musical work of art. He was too fine a critic not to recognise this fact himself, and to be aware that in works out of his genuine sphere, it was necessary for him to lay a firm hand upon the bridle of his dramatic steed. He did not thus fall into any mistake of proper taste; and just as little did he content himself with that melodious facility, which many of his predecessors had accepted as church music. Yet, although the powerful beauty of his spiritual compositions must be ranked above the pleasant charm of his chamber music, it is impossible for their hearer to shake off the feeling that all his rich fulness of characteristic melody, his brilliant colouring in harmonies, his inspiring themes, spite all his self-imposed reticence, would have found a far better application in the musical drama or the dramatic cantata.

The Mass was composed by Weber with trouble. It was not enjoined upon Saxon capellmeisters by their contract, but it had long been looked upon by old custom as their duty, to compose Masses, which became the property of the Catholic church, and could not be given publicly without exceptional permission. In certain circles the services of the capellmeisters were reckoned arithmetically, according to

the number of their Masses; and the time was still to come when such a calculation was to be made, to poor Weber's disadvantage. This fact, however, was known to Weber; and the very mortifications he had received made him all the more anxious to show in every possible way that his heart was truly in his duty. He worked, then, day and night at his Mass, to the sacrifice of his own health. The less fitted to his own peculiar talents his work appeared to him, the more energy did he bestow on his endeavours to wring it from his unwilling creative genius. Of the importance of this new composition he was himself well aware. "In the midst of all my troubles," he wrote to Lichtenstein, "I was obliged to write a Mass for the King; but, fully impressed with the greatness of such a subject, I was resolved to produce nothing commonplace. By dint of continuous exertion I was enabled to complete it by the 1st of March."

All the more remarkable was the result of this composition, considering the difficulties under which Weber had laboured. Benelli, one of the finest and most fundamental musical critics, declared, "Among all the numerous Masses of distinguished masters of the present day, I know of few which can be compared to it for expressive melody, characteristic and admirable harmony, solemn religious feeling, brilliancy of modern composition, and the union of so much fiery geniality with earnest purpose; I know of not one which can surpass it. Some musical critics, it is true, have sought to detect too much artifice in portions of the work; but this opinion I

can in no way partake." Among the many original and beautiful pieces of which the Mass consisted, it is curious to remark that the wonderfully majestic "Gloria in excelsis" in C, was written on the very day when the composer's spirit had been stricken down by the order to renounce his orchestral improvements, and the "Benedictus," the sweetest soprano solo that ever filled the human heart with heavenly love, on the day following this heavy blow. Scarcely less remarkable was the fact that it was in a state of utter bodily prostration, superinduced by vexation as well as continuous mental suffering, that Weber composed one of the most original and striking of the pieces —the "Offertorium" for five voices, in which four support a simple religious harmony, whilst the fifth and highest floats above all the others in a lovely richly-coloured burst of melody, like a lark above the Sunday bells of a village church.

The Mass was produced for the first time in the Catholic church on the 8th of March. But all the composer's efforts to fulfil his presumed duties to the uttermost—efforts which had materially undermined his health—were nigh failing their worldly aim and leaving no trace behind. The Court was not present in the church on the occasion. But general public attention had been aroused by the work. It had excited a great sensation among the congregation at large, as well as the musicians present. The attention of Prince Anton, himself an excellent musician, was in turn awakened by all he heard. At his solicitation the Mass was again performed, on the 24th

of March, in the presence of the Court, and of a congregation which crowded the church to its furthest recesses. It was on this occasion that the ring, so pompously announced by Count Einsiedel as a compensatory mark of royal favour, was handed over to the composer.

Bitter as were Weber's feelings at this epoch, and many as were the annoyances which beset him, his artistic activity was unwearied during all these days. A little chorus for Kotzebue's drama "The Village in the Mountains," and some incidental pieces for the drama of "The Family of Anglade," adapted from the French by Theodor Hell, were not perhaps of much account. More remarkable, and indeed one of Weber's sweetest Lieder compositions, was the serenade, "Schöne Ahnung ist erglommen," written for the birthday of the Prince Max, and afterwards re-arranged as one of the most heart-stirring and exciting of the favourite pieces for male voices sung in all German Gesang-Vereine. Of still more importance was the trio for the original combination of pianoforte, violoncello, and flute, which contains perhaps more evidence of those dramatic tendencies, which were almost irrepressible in the composer, than any other of his pieces of chamber music. A country scene, with festive dance-music, and the varying feelings of love's hopes and fears, is the evident groundwork of the composition, which contains so many lovely, sympathetic, or humorous melodies, strung together like a string of the finest pearls, that a little comic opera might have found enough and to spare

among them. To the same harassing period belong also several of those true German songs, which stir at once all German hearts. "Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär," "Weine, weine nur nicht," the "Song of the Shepherdess," and others, as well as the coronation march for Gehe's tragedy of "Henri IV.," which was given on the 6th June with especial splendour—a composition already mentioned as inspired in so strange a manner, and possessing a musical historical interest, as afterwards adopted by the composer, with full orchestral instrumentation, for the last finale of his "Oberon." The most important creation, however, of this early portion of the year 1818 was unquestionably a piece of music, the product of Weber's fully inspired genius, and unsurpassed for purity of choral tone, true geniality, and depth of feeling—the piece marked "No. 3" in the opera of "Der Freischütz," comprising not only the never-to-be-forgotten and characteristic peasants' waltz, but the great air of Max, "Durch die Wälder, durch die Auen"—comprising, in fact, melodies which have been the dearest boyhood's dreams of the present generation. It was completed on the 22d April. Fully to paint the picture of the contrast between the outer world, which was now attacking Weber with sorrow, disappointment, and vexation, and that inner world, for which he created his own sunshine, it is necessary to mention two of his most comic literary works, which were written at this period—his admirable nouvelette, "Der Schambeitzger," full of piquant harmless humour, and his

"Hanswurst Epilogue" to his own projected novel, "Tonkünstler's Leben," both of which are striking evidences of his powers of self-abstraction from the moral turmoil assailing him from without.

But, irrespective of his art, Weber had now an earthly castle, the doors of which his beloved Caroline defended not only from his enemies, but from all thoughts of their evil doings. "They might have reached their aim of getting rid of me for ever," he was wont afterwards to say; "for between sorrow and hard labour I was nigh bodily crushed down, had they chosen for their efforts a less happy period of my life. The poison could not work, as love's balsam was ever ready with an antidote." Caroline von Weber was now, both morally and physically, in her bloom. Her practical, sensible, smilingly-bestowed advice was a constant boon to her husband in his art. In his home she realised all his fondest dreams of sweet domesticity and comfort. Quiet, economical, and full of taste and tact in all her household avocations, she moved about the dwelling like a perpetual ray of cheering sun. She knew how to anticipate, with an instinct which bordered on divination, every hidden desire of her "dear man;" her loving heart jumped at once at the best means of supporting and forwarding his interests. As mistress of Weber's house, she had the invaluable talent of making every guest feel thoroughly at home, and communicating to all, as if by a magnetic current, her own happy liveliness. Her reputation for admirable arrangement of her tea and supper-table was

soon great in domestic circles: whether alone with her Carl by the fireside, or at the head of a crowded table, she made her fine taste and sense of comfort equally felt. Account-books, house-keeping books, cellar-books, were all kept with care and accuracy in her busy hands. In every sense, as "Hausfrau," Caroline von Weber was perfection.

But much and deservedly as Caroline was beloved by her husband, the "good man" had still moments when he could show his characteristic energy. The clever "Hausfrau" had neither any special taste or inclination for the exercise of practical cookery; nor, spite her husband's entreaties, did she show any zeal in studying the art. So, one fine day, Weber dismissed his cook, and begged his wife to preside herself over the kitchen hearth, assisted only by the housemaid. The first efforts of the unwilling pupil in the culinary art were made amidst many tears and repeated failures. But Weber smiled at all the spoiled viands so pleasantly, that the young cook took courage, learned to provide a dinner over which "hubby" could nod his head with full satisfaction, and at length was renowned as a mistress of kitchen science. No less energetically, although with much inward suffering to his own heart, did Weber attempt to exorcise the demon, which in past years had already caused him so much sorrow, and which began again to peep out in his domestic life. He was the most faithful of husbands, and was wounded to the quick by any doubts of his fidelity. But he was often thrown in the way of lovely and clever

women, who did the artist homage; and Caroline had a constitutional tendency to jealousy. The means to effect a cure were undertaken by Weber with almost heroic spirit. He had promised to sit to Matthäi, the sculptor, for his bust, and resolved that its presentation should be a surprise to his little wife. Weber's unaccustomed absences during the sittings soon aroused the demon of suspicion in his wife. But all the jealous Caroline's questions, entreaties, even tears, her husband only met with the most determined silence. Her jealous doubts were more and more confirmed. She was the most unhappy, the most betrayed of women: her heart was breaking. It needed all Weber's firmness of character, with his truly loving heart, to witness the real sufferings of the beloved one, and yet pursue the painful operation. When at last he brought the bust into the room, and with it presented to his wife an attestation, signed by the sculptor, of every hour, every minute of his absence, the tortured woman's happiness knew no bounds. Had Weber's method, however, fully effected a cure? Perhaps not. At all events, it had proved a palliative.

Both of the married couple were zealous early risers; and by both the long morning, until the business of the theatre required attention, was generally passed in work. After the comfortable breakfast, during which a great dog and a large gray cat always sat by the chair of Weber, who had an overweening fondness for all animals, and when he discussed household affairs with his wife, the composer

was accustomed to undertake such occupations as called for less strain of creative fancy and clearness of intellect. It was principally in the evening alone that he put down on paper those conceptions which, during the hours of the day, he had fostered in his brain. From the hour of ten most of his forenoons were occupied by rehearsals. When this was not the case, he loved before the dinner-hour, which was at one o'clock, to take a walk before the city-gates with his wife, or pay such visits as his lively conscientiousness in such matters considered necessary.

As might be well supposed, a social circle was soon formed around a couple, so highly gifted, so agreeable, and so thoroughly versed in the ways of best making their guests "at home." Weber's house was soon noted, not only as the pleasantest in Dresden, but as one to which admission was most sedulously sought. Like all persons, who need to have their faculties unhampered in after hours, Weber hated ceremonious dinner-parties. But he loved to see around his table such friends as would not hinder him in the enjoyment of his customary and necessary siesta. This fancy frequently led to his putting his little wife to some embarrassment by bringing home three or four unexpected guests, and yet always requiring that his dinner-table should be well and plentifully spread. But Caroline soon learned the art of meeting all these surprises with undisturbed serenity, and of conjuring up her supplementary dishes as if by a fairy wand. After the siesta came the coffee, his enjoyment of which, poor Weber,

many a time and oft, disturbed by reading the papers, and angering and exciting himself over adverse criticisms, however unimportant the hand that penned them. Even when at the very summit of his reputation he could not conquer this weakness. It must be said, however, that unfavourable criticisms of his friends agitated him just as powerfully. On such occasions he would purpose replies, which generally, however, remained unwritten: those which he did put into print rarely tended to render his life more agreeable. The few evenings which were not occupied by his afternoon service in the church, or his duties as conductor in the theatre, he was wont to spend in unremitting hard work, sometimes long after his supper-hour.

After his evenings at the theatre, the fatigue of which was always prostrating to him, Weber liked to seek the society of his male friends. Even at the very commencement of his married life, might he be seen struggling down the Schlossgasse from the theatre, through wind and snow, and turn into one of the narrow high houses of the street, situated at another street-corner, where the scanty rays of two dim lamps shone down on a counter laden with all the dainties of an Italian warehouseman, and cast impish shadows from rows of sausages and hams upon the ceiling. This was the shop of Chiappone, the Italian, in one of the small dark rooms behind which, all that Dresden knew as most distinguished in literature and art met and confabulated during the earlier years of the present century. Here

serious gray-headed old gentlemen sought a fountain of youth in their Hochheimer and Burgundy, as they luxuriously swallowed their oysters and caviare; and here Weber would shake the snow from his cloak, seat himself upon the leathern chair reserved for his use, or offered him with respect, and look around him. There, through the dimness, he might discover, in a dark corner, the creator of the "ironical" school of poetry, Ludwig Tieck, gradually disappearing behind a pile of oyster-shells; and Böttcher, the heavy man of science, with the red lamp reflected on his huge bald pate, simpering over some exquisite little piece of scandal; and Carl Förster, the German "Petrarch," seeking Italian inspiration in slices of salami; and Friedrich Kind, the great uncomprehended, guarding carefully his poet's dignity in the seat behind the stove, and superciliously sipping his Rhine wine; and Theodor Hell gesticulating, shrugging his shoulders, relating in exuberant pantomime some theatrical event, wagging his bushy head, snapping his cunning eyes, and all the while avoiding the Charybdis of offence, without falling on the Scylla of controversy; and old "Don Juan" Bassi bursting with stentorian laughter. And then Weber would be at once in the very midst of the conversation, flashing around his ready wit, or indulging in endless jokes, not always the most unequivocal, with the motto "*desipere in loco*" firmly engraved upon his heart; and now and then calling up long faces and sudden silence by daring to tread on what was considered dangerous ground; for, although from

all parts of Germany, the members of the company had already learned to be good Dresdeners, and even when safely ensconced in that dark room, would rather lose their tongues than venture to speak of public affairs, governmental service, or "their Highnesses;" and Weber was used to more freedom of discourse in other lands.

Although Weber's wit and humour might have fairly held their ground by the side of Tieck's great poet mind, and Böttcher's thundering science, yet it was not perhaps in the Chiappone circle that his social advantages were seen in the best light. They were more conspicuous there, where the weight of his great musical talents could be thrown into the balance; and in this respect he had a fresh and important ally in his pretty wife. Persons are still living, who had an opportunity of meeting the gifted pair in the "Liederkreis," or in the hospitable house of the minister Nostitz, or in other social circles; and from whose memory a space of forty years has not effaced the impression which the Webers made, when they sang together the composer's sprightliest songs, or Caroline declaimed a poem, to which her husband improvised on the piano; and when Weber's joyous humour electrified all hearts, and inspired the most serious of the statesmen of the day to gaiety. In his own house, when friends were assembled around him, he was the most joyous, whilst the most unaffected of all hosts. To the young talented members of his operatic company he showed his most pleasant attentions; and would call to them at times,

when dancing took place, and he himself set all going by the inspiriting dances which seemed to flow spontaneously from his fingers, "Come, look alive! When the father plays, the children must dance their best."

The bursting forth of the spring of the year 1818 was hailed by Weber with intense delight. The winter had been unusually severe; he had suffered as much in body as in mind; and his labours had been as oppressive as his troubles had been harassing. But now he could look forward to the realisation of one of his fondest dreams. A country residence in some lovely spot, with a beloved wife by his side, was, in his idea, the summit of felicity. And what was now to stand in the way of this great happiness? During their winter promenades in the environs of Dresden, the young couple had spied everywhere around to find a cosy summer nest, not too remote, however, from the city. As spring started more and more into life, and the days grew longer, many a voyage of discovery was undertaken, some of such excursions being metamorphosed into social parties, by land or by water, such as both Weber and his wife loved well. Naturally, their researches were principally made in the direction of the royal château of Pillnitz, where a great portion of Weber's summer service was performed; and their busy search was at last crowned with success. Close by the Schloss they found a first-floor in the small country-house of a vineyard proprietor; and many a day did the

gratified husband walk his five miles and more to Pillnitz, and as many back, without a murmur, if only to measure a corner where some pet piece of Caroline's furniture was to be bestowed, trolling the new melodies which sprang up within him, by the way. During this comparatively happy period moreover, the capellmeister was actively engaged with the study and rehearsals of Mozart's "Seraglio," the fresh young beauties, dramatic character, and bright humour of which awakened all his liveliest sympathies. It was an opera of which he himself was wont to say, "Had Mozart lived, he might perhaps have written ten such operas as Don Juan; but he never more could have found another Seraglio in his heart."

It was impossible, however, that Weber should not have been injuriously affected, in body as well as in mind, by the incessant exertions which, combined with the many moral struggles he had undergone, had caused a constant wear and tear of his whole being. He never had been strong. His nervous system was now lowered to a fearful degree; his voice gave way; the oppression of his chest became chronic; in fact, all the symptoms of the fell disease, which, eight years afterwards, were to bring him to his grave, were already beginning to sap the very core of his life. But he regarded these fatal signs but little. His dear little summer nest was tenanted, to his intense delight, on the 18th June. The dwelling in which the greater portions of his "Der Freischütz," his "Euryanthe," and

his "Oberon," were to find their creation, still stands in its (now neglected) garden, on the high-road from Dresden to Pillnitz. From his window the composer commanded a view over the garden and the neighbouring corn-fields and orchards, to the woods and chestnut alleys of the park of Pillnitz, and the vine-clad hills of the valley of the Elbe. Close by the house was a narrow, shady, sweetly-green valley, through which a path led to hills commanding views of almost unsurpassable loveliness. At the entrance stood a small country inn, with an excellent bowling-ground, where he loved to have a turn with other zealous players; and higher up, on a rocky platform, the most picturesque of water-mills. On every side, the most romantic forms and loveliest colours from Nature's pallet, offered inspiration to the composer on his walks. Woods whispered to him in soft murmurs; and falling streams splashed melodiously over rock and stone to sing to him. No wonder that, in the fulness of his heart, he should have talked in rapture of his "Paradise."

In fact the beautiful environs of Dresden had gradually stolen Weber's heart. He grew proud of the beauties of his adopted country; and when strangers came, his greatest pleasure was to carry them to the "Saxon Switzerland," with its wondrously strange scenery, its chaotic masses of rock, and its yawning ravines, and revel in their enjoyment of the scenes, the grandeur and originality of which so often filled his own soul with ecstasy and awe. In-

deed, so fully was Weber's heart filled with the beauties of nature around him, that he was wont to complain, when more advantageous offers were later made him elsewhere, or the exigencies of health or art took him away, that they exercised too strong a magic spell upon him—a spell he could not break. "I know," he wrote to Rochlitz, in after days, "that a deadening, suffocating air, which is death to art, pervades all here; and that I could and should do far, far more were I to leave the place: but somehow I cannot make up my mind to fly away from this confounded beautiful nest."

The society which Weber received in his little country dwelling was somewhat mixed, but always animated. Sometimes the old noble kammerherr, just come from court, would take off his embroidered coat, the young lieutenant, just escaped from the guard-house, his uniform, or the village farrier his jacket, to join in a game of bowls; and the capell-meister, who would fling off his gray summer surtout, and with his long muscular arms show a force, an ability, and an unwearied activity at the game, for which his meagre weakly frame could scarcely have been thought to qualify him. Sometimes the whole male herd would rush off for a bath in the Elbe. Sometimes water-parties were formed upon the stream. Sometimes walking excursions were projected, during which meetings with the royal princes and princesses were frequent; and on these latter occasions, Weber was so accustomed to receive such flattering attentions, and so many affectionate tokens

of interest, that he could often no longer comprehend how so much annoyance, mortification, and sorrow could come to him from the court, and would strive to banish from his mind all the evil demons which beset it during the hard winter months.

The picture of Weber's country life was animated by a variety of human figures. His doors were never closed to visitors, when either he or his wife were at home. Even when pressed by work, he could not deny himself to intruders. Visitors of every kind would arrive, attracted by his great reputation; and, when convinced that curiosity alone was their object, Weber would sometimes sit with cold mien and motionless face, listening to the talk of his self-installed guests, and thereby obtaining the unmerited reputation, among those who knew him little, of being cold, capricious, and supercilious. But for all his Dresden friends there was always a hearty, genuine, and ready welcome. In that little house at Hosterwitz a friendly hand was always extended, with a pleasant smile, to Kind, Miksch, Böttcher, Bassi, and all the several members of the "Liederkreis;" for them the good but frugal meal was always ready; and when the animated and joyous conversation was sometimes prolonged to a late hour of the evening, beds would be improvised for some of the city wanderers, whom Weber would rouse in the morning to wander back with them. Even from the "enemy's camp" he would hail visitors with genuine friendliness. Among these one of the most welcome was the "soprano" Giovanni Sassaroli, for whom Weber entertained a

sincere affection as well as pity. As an artist Sassaroli was incomparable; his sweet but powerful voice would fill the Catholic church as with angels' tones. His noble and kindly heart met with the deepest sympathy from one whose own heart was so kindly and so noble. Sassaroli's love for children, whom he would caress with tears streaming down his cheeks, was passionate; hatred he could entertain towards none—not even to that cruel father whose avarice had caused the misfortune of his life, but whom he supported with magnanimous generosity until his death. The beardless livid face of the heavy fat soprano would brighten into the most loving, genial smile under the pressure of kind Weber's hand. Two others there were also, whom Weber's geniality had won from the ranks of his bitterest opponents. These were the brothers Roth, both clarionet-players in the royal choir. Weber's severe discipline, in his position as capellmeister, had earned at first their steady hatred; but they were too good musicians not to recognise their chief's undoubted talents. The magic of Weber's amiability had done the rest. Both, but more especially the younger brother, Gottlob Roth, who remained Weber's warmest and truest friend, even beyond the grave, were constant guests at the capellmeister's "Paradise." Officers and government officials, with their families, were also to be found in that pleasant social circle; not all, perhaps, of the highest intellect, but kindly, affectionate friends: and Weber was wont to shun sometimes the constant mental exertion which cleverer friends

demanded, and find repose in the less exacting commonplaces of ordinary social life.

The picture of Weber's country life would not be complete without his numerous menagerie. His love for dumb animals has been already mentioned. Beyond the former pets he had now others, which certainly may have been called "household plagues:" a large handsome hound, a present from a royal Oberjäger; a raven, who said "Good night" so cheerily, that Weber could not resist buying him from a Tyrolese birdcatcher; a starling, which Caroline had rescued from the hands of some mischievous boys; and, above all, a handsome Angola cat called Maune, without whose companionship Weber never could be happy. Later, a lively but most tiresome little ape was added to this collection.

There is no doubt that constant enjoyment of the open air was highly beneficial to Weber's health. He would sit to his work at the open window of his room, now and then calling "Poppet" to his young wife, as she sat occupied with tapestry or needlework in the little garden arbour, and eliciting a nod of the head, a kiss from the hand, or a smile; then, when all was over, throw aside his long coat, hurry down into the garden, and, stretching out his arms in the fresh warm summer air, cry joyously, "Where is there a happier fellow than I?"

CHAPTER V.

WEBER AND THE SAXON COURT.

ALTHOUGH still ailing, and only in some degree restored to health, Weber, ever anxious to win the favour of his sovereign, which he always had deeply at heart, could not be easy until he had undertaken a new work, which there is no doubt greatly overtasked his powers at the time. He was desirous of celebrating the fête-day of the Queen by a festal musical composition. Morlacchi, it is true, had returned to Germany at the beginning of July; but he was sedulously occupied on a fresh opera, which had been ordered for the Fenice at Venice. So Weber offered his services for the festive occasion, put himself in communication with Kind, and obtained from him the words of a charming little cantata, entitled "Nature and Love," and intended principally to describe the happy domestic life of the royal pair. It consisted of two choruses, four recitatives, a duett, a terzett, and a sextett, to piano accompaniment. More especially were the three latter pieces full of charming local colouring, fresh spring of melody,

and rosy fragrance. The composition excited the liveliest interest in the small, quiet court circle of Pillnitz. All the princes and princesses then present at the court, three of the young princes having ridden over from Dresden for the purpose, assembled in Weber's small low rooms, in order to be present at the general rehearsal. The whole company wore the air of a pleasant little family party. "Their highnesses were all amiability and kindness," wrote Weber; "one really must have no heart not to love them." When the chief business of the meeting was over, other part-songs were sung, to the great delectation of the royal guests; and as the evening shades began to fall, Weber applied the match to a firework he had procured from Dresden, and, as it burst into a blaze, proposed a jubilee toast to the royal house of Saxony. On the appointed day the cantata was performed in the apartments of the Queen at Pillnitz. "Our gracious Queen," wrote Weber to Kind, "was greatly moved, and expressed her gratitude most feelingly. His Majesty came and listened to a portion of it. The whole day there was no other topic of conversation; and your poem received the greatest praise. In fact the success of the whole was perfect. I should have liked to have talked the affair over with you; but you are going; and there is table-music at the Schloss to-day, at which I am bound to be present."

The table-music to which allusion is here made, was of unusual importance, inasmuch as it introduced at court a young singer, Friederike Funk (afterwards

the mother of the cantatrice Mademoiselle Lagrua), the favourite pupil of Miksch, who had been sent for two years to Italy at the cost of the crown, and was now engaged for the Italian opera at Dresden. She had returned to Germany, a ready proficient in all the Italian florid school, but, in the opinion both of Weber and Miksch, sadly gone back from the truest principles of art.

During the early years of Weber's official duties at Dresden, the occasional compositions to which he was generally inspired by attachment and loyalty—although on some occasions by other motives—made a great call upon his creative powers. The genuine loyalty with which he undertook the composition of his jubilee cantata, for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the reign of King Friedrich August of Saxony, was unquestionable. The King himself, who had never recovered from the sad impression made upon him by the events which led to the partition of Saxony, would willingly have reduced all celebration of the event to a quiet religious service in the church. But the people was not to be gainsayed in its desire to demonstrate in more lively fashion its attachment to a king who, after all, commanded its love and respect. Long before the day of the anniversary, on the 20th of September, the voice of the people's hearts was heard in unmistakeable accents. The musical portion of the festivities was to be restricted, however, by the King's express desire, to a great court concert, and festive church-music. Still the court concert, in order to give unusual import-

ance to the occasion, was commanded to take place in the Opera-house. Morlacchi, from the very first, declared, that, beyond the direction of the great Mass in the church on the morning of the jubilee, he had no time to undertake any thing. It was Count Vitzthum's desire then, that Weber should compose a great jubilee cantata for the important concert. Count Einsiedel of course pronounced himself, on the contrary, in favour of a brilliant Italian selection. Vitzthum, however, relied upon the hope that, when once composed, Weber's cantata would be sure to be given; and, on his own risk, he gave the German capellmeister the commission to set to work upon it as early as the end of July, and implored him to be as brilliant as possible.

Early in August Kind had the words of the desired jubilee cantata ready. From that moment Weber was no longer to be seen strolling pleasantly in the lovely environs of his country dwelling with his pretty wife and favourite dog. For more than thirteen long days, and, it may be said, nights also, when not summoned by his duties to Dresden, might he be seen bent over his table, at his window, with pale face and weary eyes, toiling at that work which, excepting his operas, was to give the most brilliant specimen of his powers of production at this epoch. The results of the exertion thus painfully made, and once more to the extreme detriment of his health, were astounding: the instrumentation of the sixty-three pages of the composition was completed in three days. As a whole, the cantata, by the fullness of

its expression, its masterly execution, and the richness of its colouring, bears the undeniable stamp of that period of Weber's genius when his powers of creation were at their fullest, and the direction he gave them was the truest to his own nature. But even in a far higher degree than in the cantata itself, may all Weber's most precious artistic qualities, his power, his fire, his rhythm, and his magic in contrasting melody, be found in the overture to the composition. Under the name of the "Jubel Ouvertüre," it has earned its high position in the musical heart and soul of the German people. Where to this day is there any great festive occasion in Germany, when this overture, so full of the profoundest majesty of joy, bursting at last into the fervent prayer "God save the King," is not heard to peal forth its song of solemn gladness?

Weber returned to Dresden from his country life at Hosterwitz on the 28th August, thoroughly prostrated both in body and mind. Symptoms of his fatal illness had again appeared; and a long winter lay before him. He returned to meet, once more, with bitter mortification. Already, during the commencement of the composition, Schmiedel had communicated to Weber his fears that other arrangements were being already taken for the great concert. But the composer had been resolved to persevere. "In any case I will compose the cantata," he had written to Kind. "I will produce it too as my own independent homage to our monarch; or, should this be denied me, I will print it." The fears already ex

pressed were destined to prove only too true. On the 12th September Count Vitzthum came to Weber, to announce to him that, spite all his own efforts, the jubilee cantata was not to be given. He had only obtained, by dint of much trouble and intercession, permission for Weber to produce his overture. Bitterly mortified as he was, Weber at first refused to allow his overture to be played; and it was only upon Vitzthum's urgent supplications that he at last renounced this angry determination. The nature of the programme, which eventually appeared, was sufficient to mark the influences that had directed the whole affair. The names of the composers who supplied all the vocal pieces, in which a German people was supposed to pour out all its love and regard for a German sovereign, were Morlacchi, Nicolini, and Zingarelli; and the German genius had been bidden to hold his peace.

The jubilee cantata was given, however, at the express solicitation of the whole choir, in the Neustadt church, for the benefit of the destitute peasantry in the Hartz mountains. The mortification to which Weber had been again exposed was everywhere known; and the confluence to mark the expression of the public sympathy on the occasion was unusually great. Weber himself conducted his cantata: the singers and instrumentalists amounted to 250; and all seemed resolved to bestow upon the production its fullest effect. The contrast of this performance with the triviality of the great court concert was in every mouth. Whatever triumph the Italian party

had thought to have secured, the German people pronounced itself on the side of the German capellmeister: and it did its best to compensate its beloved composer, as well as it could, for the time, talent, and health he had sacrificed in vain, and the hopes so bitterly disappointed. In another quarter also Weber found some compensation. His ever-attached patron and friend, Duke Emil August of Gotha, had come to Dresden, to be present at the celebration of the Saxon jubilee. Immediately after the performance of the overture in the theatre, he had hurried round to greet his "good friend" Weber, and expressed to him, in his usual amiable and unceremonious manner, his unbounded delight at what he had heard, and his sympathy for the entire work.

The presence of the kindly Duke prompted Weber now to seize the opportunity for the purpose of obtaining a favour which he had much at heart. It was not for himself he would have solicited, under the circumstances. His petition was for a friend. The more the composition of "Der Freischütz" advanced, the more Weber felt the obligations under which he lay to Kind, for an opera-book in every way so congenial to his spirit. He knew how vain the "great uncomprehended" was; he knew that nothing could give him so much pleasure as a title. And so Weber solicited from his kind patron the title of "court counsellor" for the poet. The jovial Duke accorded the petition with a genial smile; and Weber, one of whose greatest joys it was to look on happy faces, brought the good news himself to Kind,

and placed the diploma in the hands of his astonished friend. Kind himself, it would seem, was afterwards by no means pleased, when he learned by chance that it was to Weber alone he owed the honour he had received; but Weber, on the contrary, was too delighted not to thank the good Duke for his obliging service in a letter, full of that amiable geniality so characteristic of the kind-hearted composer.

The series of the jubilee festivities, which were destined to take place in Dresden at this period, were not, however, at an end. The celebration of the "golden wedding" of the royal pair, or, in other words, of the fiftieth anniversary of their union, was about to fall on the 17th February 1819. This festivity, which belonged more exclusively to the family circle of the royal family, had not the same importance, in a general point of view, as that which roused a whole people's loyalty: but Weber's heart, spite all his mortifications, felt the sincerest attachment to the royal house of Saxony; and this attachment he seized on the opportunity to evince. Weber certainly had no direct commission to compose a Mass for the occasion; but as Morlacchi had been occupied on that which was given in celebration of the previous jubilee, he considered that it was his own turn now; and, full of hope as well as genuine loyalty, he set to work, on the 17th November, upon a grand jubilee Mass, destined for the important occasion of the "golden wedding."

Nothing could be more different, in the character of their treatment, than these two jubilee works of

the great composer. In the first, all was pomp and grandeur, animated by the feelings of a people's love and a sovereign's truth; in the second, every note was inspired by the sentiments of sweetness and love, and was characteristic of mutual affection and domestic happiness. Indeed, it would have been impossible for Weber to produce any work in which the whole tendency of the feeling, analogous to the subject, was not as distinctly to be recognised, as it obviously sprang from the whole warmth of his heart. There is not one single piece in the whole Mass, in which the sentiment of the inmost love does not make itself felt in the midst of all the varying emotions of the great solemn offering made by Christian devotion.

But again was poor Weber destined to work upon this labour of love, for which his own religious feeling inspired him, at the same time, with the truest sympathy, amidst anxieties and sorrows, to which were added personal suffering, and a fearful irritation of his whole nervous system. Caroline von Weber was about to become a mother, and was subject to constant attacks of indisposition, which were greatly increased by her strong feeling on the occasion of any annoyance offered to her husband. The love of home and family ties had always been one of the greatest characteristics of Weber's whole nature; and he revelled with delight in the thought that he should soon be a father. His first and highest duty was now care for his little wife. Unfortunately, Weber had the most unbounded confidence in medical science; and every word that fell from a phy-

sician's mouth was to him a sacred oracle. The dictum of the last medical practitioner, with whom he held consultation, was to be implicitly obeyed. Hence arose a constant change in the system of treatment, which became eventually highly prejudicial both to his poor little wife and himself. His evil star brought him thus into connexion with two physicians, each clever in his way, but each diametrically opposed in system to the other. Royal physician, Court Counsellor Hedenus, was a man of the old school, with pigtail, gold shoe-buckles, and gold snuff-box, which he seemed to regard as an important talisman, who trod with the softest step, but applied the most violent remedies. "Stomach, sir; all stomach," was his invariable decision. The other, Russian Court Counsellor Weigel, was a smart, elegant young fellow, with black curly hair, a fine fiery eye, and a soft beautiful hand — a lady-killer. He declared Weber's indisposition to be "all throat." Weber believed implicitly in both, and invariably followed the prescriptions of the one until the other came. A far stronger nature than his must have given way under such assaults upon his constitution.

Rendered thus sad and uneasy, as he was, both by the ailing condition of his wife and his own constant indisposition, Weber became nervous, irritable in temper, and morbidly suspicious of every thing which he could look upon as the slightest attack on his position or his official dignity. His state of nervous excitement became so great that he actually beat his servant out of the house with a stick, for having sup-

pressed his letters, and put the money for their prepayment into his own pocket, to the intense confusion of all Weber's business affairs. In this diseased condition of moral and physical irritation, the smallest trifles, at this period, assumed unreal importance in his eyes. The conduct of Morlacchi, who, it must be said, always found a particular pleasure in angering his German colleague by petty slights, drove poor Weber almost into a state of frenzy. Remonstrance after remonstrance upon Morlacchi's undue proceedings—his persistence to adopt the title of "primo maestro," his arrogant orders to his German colleague, and his continual endeavours to put the burden of his own work on the shoulders of the latter—were being constantly forwarded to Count Einsiedel. In a healthy state of body and of mind, Weber would have scorned to have given way to the irritation which prompted these weaknesses. It must be said, however, that the German capellmeister had sufficient cause for anger in all the underhand intrigues which were going on around him. For nearly two years now had he been the director of the German Opera, without making any attempt to put forward his own operatic productions. In the month of November he resolved to produce his own "Sylvana" before the Dresden public. But as soon as this fact was known, Morlacchi and his Italian party were in the field: open as well as secret intrigues were immediately set to work, to thwart the German capellmeister's intention; and so many hindrances were thrown in his way, that the sick and wearied Weber

threw aside his purpose in disgust. Rehearsals of his opera were rendered impossible to him; singers were put by the Italian capellmeister on the sick-list; the hours chosen for the rehearsals of his own work were invariably those selected by Morlacchi, by a prescriptive priority of right granted to the Italian Opera, for some purpose of his own connected with the company. With difficulty was Weber enabled to call together three rehearsals of "Sylvana." When the fourth had been set aside about a dozen different times, he flung down his baton angrily, and stamping with his foot, exclaimed, "May every note of the opera be accursed, if I ever give it on this stage!" He withdrew his work; and it was only many years after his death that "Sylvana" appeared on the Dresden boards.

Poor Weber's disappointments and mortifications were to find no end. Towards the close of the year—a year during which he had employed his artistic activity almost exclusively in giving testimonies of his attachment and homage to the royal house—another bitter mortification had to be endured by him. Encouraged by the many evidences of kindly disposition shown to him by certain members of the royal family, Weber ventured to express the desire that the King and Queen would graciously consent to allow their names to be recorded as godfather and godmother to the child about to be born to him. His petition was granted with every appearance of the best will. On such occasions, which were of no rare occurrence in the Catholic countries of Germany at

the time, it was the custom of royal personages to command their places to be taken at the ceremony by certain officers of state, and to evince their consideration for the parents by the rank of the official proxies. The arrangement of the affair was placed by the King in the hands of the master of the household. It had thus been confided to a principal member of the Italian court coterie, in which the depreciation and degradation of the presumptuous German capellmeister were looked upon as articles of faith. On the 22d December 1818, Weber's first child, a little girl, was born. The mother suffered greatly; and Weber's agony for his beloved wife was overwhelming. On the 26th December the ceremony of baptism took place. As a noble by birth, an official entitled to his reception at court, and a celebrated man, Weber had every right to expect that a chamberlain and lady of honour of the Queen, at least, would have appeared as representatives of their Majesties. To the speechless astonishment of all present, the proxies who entered were Schmiedel the King's valet, and one of the Queen's women of the chamber. That this degradation in no way arose from any intention of the royal godfather and godmother, Weber was fully aware; and though sick to the heart with anger and vexation, he returned thanks to their Majesties on New-Year's Eve for the honour they had done him, without the slightest mention of the humiliation he had undergone. He knew the hand that smote him. But never, during all his service at the Court of Saxony, did he feel any

humiliation as cruelly as he felt this one. The child received the names of Marie Caroline Friederike Auguste.

On the 28th of December, the Webers received the news of the death of Caroline's father; and, with hearts still more striken down than ever, they entered sadly upon the new year before them. Nor with the new year did sorrow and anxiety cease. Both mother and child were slow in gaining strength: Weber himself struggled painfully against the insidious disease assailing him, and yet pursued his duties with unfailing spirit. He had studied up with care Isouard's "Aschenbrödel," which he would gladly have produced under the personal supervision of his own Caroline, its inimitable representative, and the "Doctor and Apothecary" of Dittersdorf, an opera the bright humour of which he himself so much affected. But both these operas had failed to please; and Weber felt with consternation that the ears of his public were more and more seduced by the brilliant effects of the Italian school, and less and less likely to be attracted by a simpler and sounder German taste. Besides, according to old custom, the good public, before it raised its hands to applaud, was accustomed to look round to the more aristocratic boxes; and there all hands were motionless. In writing to his friend Schmidt, in Berlin, relative to the production of that composer's "Fischermädchen," he says, "Your opera has pleased. It could not make any great sensation. Rich Italian sauces have so spoiled the palate of our

public here, that good honest German fare is not to its taste."

The jubilee celebration of the "golden wedding" was now drawing close at hand, and Weber could at least console himself with the thought that he should be able to do homage to the royal pair, and once more earn distinction for himself, by his magnificent new work. But even this hope was not to be accorded to him without the accustomed dose of bitterness. A few days before the festal occasion, Count Vitzthum announced to him, that permission had been given, it was true, for the performance of his Mass, but that Morlacchi and Polledro had been commissioned to compose for it the symphony and the offertorium, and that his own were to be suppressed. Now, Weber held to the integrity of all his works, as indispensable for their general understanding; it may be guessed, therefore, how deeply and painfully he was wounded in his artistic soul by the announcement of this order. So much was he shaken by the news, that, ailing as he was, he feared not to be able to direct his own portion of the church music of the day. He even considered it better to withdraw his Mass. But from such a step, which might have been looked upon as an insult to the royal pair, he was withheld, mainly by the amiable remonstrances of Prince Anton, with whom circumstances brought him just then more intimately in connexion.

The old Prince was a great lover of the art; and his musical evenings were as unfettered by formality

as they were pleasant. In his gray coat and short breeches, with powdered head and buckles to his shoes, the familiar old gentleman would potter about among his assembled artists, and make music with them, as one of themselves, cry out, after a time, "Well! I think we have done a good stroke of work, let's go and have something to eat," and then sit jovially down in their midst to supper, with nothing to mark the royal prince but the respect and love of all. Now, Prince Anton had composed his own little cantata for this jubilee occasion, to be performed in a small circle of the royal family. Weber was invited to the rehearsals of the princely work, and consulted by the princely composer, who would stop frequently in his conducting to exclaim, "Now, what have you got to say, capellmeister?" The talent of the Prince was unquestionable; but in the matter of musical science there were objections to be made. "Come here, then," said the Prince, laughing; "here is a pencil; now you just correct my faults." And, like a schoolboy, the Prince stood by, smiling and rubbing his hands, as the master marked out his little errors.

Weber's jubilee Mass was given with the additions made to order by Morlacchi and Polledro. His old evil star seemed to have combined to aid the intrigues of his enemies on this occasion. An Italian tenor, Giovanni Cantu by name, was to sing for the first time in the Catholic church in Morlacchi's offertorium. His great reputation had been widely spread by the Italian capellmeister, who had discovered him at Milan. He was known to be young—only one-

and-twenty years of age—eminently handsome, and endowed with a lovely and magnificent tenor voice, the like of which had never been heard by the ears of the Dresden Italian-worshippers, all spoiled as they had been.* The excitement, caused by awakened expectation, was so great, that, until Morlacchi's offertorium commenced, scarcely any attention was shown to the unfortunate Mass. The week following, however, Weber was able to reproduce his Jubilee Mass in its pristine integrity, and under favourable conditions. Sassaroli, Buccolini, Benelli, and Benincasa sang so admirably, that the composer's pale anxious face, surmounted by his black velvet skull-cap, might frequently be seen nodding with satisfaction to his worthy executants.

About a month afterwards Weber hoped to see the dark cloud, which hovered perpetually between him and royal favour, at last swept aside. At all events, one clear ray of brightness had pierced it, as he thought. He unexpectedly received the order to compose an opera for the celebration of the approaching union of Prince Friedrich August with the Archduchess Caroline of Austria, the choice of subject being left entirely to himself. Weber was overjoyed. At last he would have an opportunity of showing his devotion to the royal house, by producing a work, which, he was resolved, should be the greatest and the best, which his art, his genius, and his now rich experience were able to produce. Count Vitzthum had at first determined to put up the subject of this opera to competition among the literary

* This highly-gifted young singer died three years afterwards.

eminences of Dresden. But, having received from Kind an irritated letter, in which the "great uncomprehended" refused to accept of any competition, and knowing that Weber had a partiality for Kind as coadjutor, Vitzthum eventually confided the writing of the book to the insulted poet, with a request that the subject might be chosen from the history of Saxony. But even with this request the ambitious Kind was not disposed to acquiesce. Such a subject, confined to one poor little province of the world, he declared, was far too cramping for the creator of a work which "ought to bear a monumental character." He condescended, however, to send in three subjects—one historical, one mythological, and one of fairy nature: the last was selected.

Kind, when his ambition or his vanity were excited, was a mighty worker. In ten days the greater portion of the opera of "Alcindor" was in Count Vitzthum's hands. The subject, taken from one of the tales in the "Arabian Nights," was one fully adapted for the development of the most gorgeous stage splendour, as well as of the most varied charms of music. All the magic of oriental romance was now before Weber's eyes—the dazzling splendours of fairyland, of precious gems in store, of blades flashing in the sunlight, and fountains glistening in the rays of the moon—a world, in which Weber's genius loved to revel. Perpetual councils were being held between the author, the composer, the scene-painter, and the machinist: the scenic artists especially were constantly employed upon models and sketches. All

were resolved that the splendour of this opera should surpass all hitherto known to man. Weber was never more congenially employed than when he was putting all the mechanism of a stage at work. Negotiations were commenced with Gerstäcker, the celebrated tenor at Cassel, to undertake the part of "Alcindor." So roused was Weber's dramatic spirit afresh, that even the voice of the long-neglected "Jäger's Bride" made itself heard once more. In the midst of all the excitement, Caspar's grand air was composed, and the sketch made for the great finale of the third act, which had not existed in the original state of the opera.

But in Weber's failing state of health the excitement was far too much for his weak frame. Spite all his efforts, and all his energy of will, his illness mastered him. On March 18th he was flung down powerless on a bed of suffering, which he was not to leave until the middle of April. Caroline, though herself still ailing, and tormented with anxiety about her child, nursed her beloved husband with incessant care, and used the tenderest stratagems to keep from him the knowledge of the precarious condition of their little one. Towards the end of the month Weber was slowly recovering, when his first-born died. Now it was impossible to conceal from him the truth. The blow prostrated him once more: for a long time he was delirious. Caroline could no longer rally: she, too, soon was stretched on the bed of sickness. The unhappy couple lay in neighbouring rooms, where they could cry "comfort" to each other through the wall; and where, in the still hours of the night, they

smothered their sobs in their pillows, that each might not hear the other. It was a wretched time. Kind friends were around them, however, with ever-ready help, nursing, conducting the household, comforting, and blessing. Amidst all the wretchedness was still the consolation of affection.

In the beginning of May the Webers were so far convalescent, that they were able to be conveyed into the country, for the purer air of which the artist longed with all the impatience of a finely-organised nervous nature, which feels, by inspiration, the best and truest means of cure. They were again in Hosterwitz. An unusually mild spring materially assisted their recovery. In about a week the stronger temperament of Caroline enabled her to nurse her husband unremittingly; but it was long before the suffering composer could recover the tone of his usually so active mind. He fell into a singular condition, in which the yearning for the supports of life and life's enjoyments seemed to have mastered every intellectual faculty. Old Doctor Hedenus, whose panacea was reduction of the system, enjoined the most severe and scanty diet. The convalescent man was always suffering the pangs of hunger; eating and drinking became the only objects of his thoughts. He would stand by the half hour together, watch in hand, on the kitchen stairs, and burst into fits of rage if his soup were not ready to the prescribed moment, or the cup were not full to the brim. When his favourite cat had upset the bowl of sour milk, which was the only dainty accorded him, he pursued the

culprit all over the house with a stick, like one in a state of frenzy, in order to chastise the very creature he had loved to fondle. The arrangement of his food, such as his Sangrado allowed him, for the following day was a matter of such deep and all-absorbing anxiety to him, that it would have excited a smile in Caroline, had not this strange abnormal condition of her dear husband excited her liveliest fears. What was an air to him now, compared with a plateful of bouillon? What the motive of an overture, compared with a permitted dish? What the inspirations of genius, compared with the longings of a stomach? This singular state of mind, which would have been ludicrous, had it not bordered on insanity, was exorcised at last through the calls made on Weber's attention by the visit of his old friend Wiebeking, from Munich, who was travelling to seek for solace from his grief at the loss of his daughter Fanny, the composer's favourite pupil.

The singular curse removed from his brain, Weber began once more to occupy himself with his art. Any great intellectual exertion was still impossible to him. He was chiefly employed on pianoforte arrangements of his "Abu Hassan," and of his Jubilee Cantata, with its immortal overture. Not that the adaptation of his orchestral works for the piano was with Weber a mere technical exercise of his science. In labours of this kind he was wont to create his works entirely afresh, as it were, by translating into a smaller form every one of his orchestral effects, not an idea or shade of which escaped him. "Other pianoforte ar-

rangements," wrote of Weber that clever musical critic Riehl, "were faint sketches of an original. Weber filled the miniature with all the varied colours of the picture."

But scarcely had Weber begun to feel his normal state of mind a little more firmly reëstablished, when he was again assailed by sorrows which struck him deeply to the heart, although he may have been in some degree prepared for them by unmistakable symptoms of foul weather on his horizon. Rumours had already reached him, that in high quarters, hostile to all his doings, disadvantageous remarks had been made respecting the enormous expense which Kind's subject would occasion; the want of consideration for the great personages expected for the approaching wedding, in presenting them with a German instead of a more courtly Italian opera; and the impropriety of the proposed work for an occasion on which an Italian allegorical spectacle would better find its place. Weber, so straightforward and honourable himself, could not be made to believe that a formal commission could be honourably rescinded, and all his darling hopes thus mercilessly crushed. There can be no doubt, from his well-known manner of creation, that ever since the book had been in his possession he had been seeking melodies for it in his brain, and probably had composed many of the pieces. Not a note of "Alcindor" had been put on paper, it is true; that much had been "ready thought out," as he expressed it in his diary, is equally indubitable. But on the 28th of June, Count Vitzthum

drove over to Weber, at Hosterwitz, with sad and troubled mien. The presentiments had found their realisation. An order had been received, to the effect that the opera commanded for the marriage of Prince Friedrich was to be altogether suspended. All Weber's cherished hopes were shattered. The cup of bitterness was not, however, yet drained to the dregs. "Weber," said Vitzthum, with tears of deep emotion in his eyes, "we have both done our best for the good cause, and fought the good fight with zeal and energy; but I can do no more. I have sent in my resignation as director of the theatre. It has at last been accepted; and we must part." The blow was a fatal one to Weber. He besought the Count, in the name of art, not to let his courage sink; but all was vain. "What can I do for our cause," replied Vitzthum, "when all confidence in those above is taken from me?" Such a declaration Weber could not gainsay. The step was taken; and the dark clouds gathered more and more heavily upon the horizon of the capellmeister's official world. On the stairs of the Pillnitz ferry-boat the two stanch founders of the German opera at Dresden pressed each other's hands with sorrow; and, as the hands severed, the bond was broken, which rendered their darling creation possible.

Instead of Weber's opera, a cold, dull, senseless, allegorical Italian cantata, written by Orlandi, and composed by Morlacchi, entitled "Amore e Destino," was given for the celebration of Prince Friedrich's wedding, on the 9th October. Perhaps, however, German

art had not lost so much, as might at first appear. Instead of the opera, which might always have borne more or less the character of an occasional production, the world received a series of pianoforte works, into which the composer interwove all the treasures of melody he had garnered up for another purpose, —works in which Weber's genius, as pianoforte composer, reached its culminating point; and one of which, after his operas and his "Songs of Freedom," has remained to this day the most popular of all his creations. During the summer months of this year were composed Weber's great Rondo in E flat, his great Polacca, his "Huit Pièces à Quatre Mains," so replete with the choicest ideas, and, above all, his "Invitation to the Waltz." All these pieces for the piano distinguish themselves from those of his predecessors by their dramatic character, and may be all looked upon as emanating from the impulsiveness of his dramatic genius, fostered by preparatory studies for dramatic works. "The old genuine chamber-music Weber could no longer write," said Riehl, of these very pieces. "Two new powers had assumed a preponderance in the musical life of the people—opera and concerto. This influence is stamped in his sonatas." In fact, the spring-tide of the romantic school, which blossomed forth so genially in Weber's works, demanded new forms for the embodiment of new ideas. As its representative and culminating point, Weber was accustomed to experimentalise in this respect more than almost any other musician; and there is scarce any country the national costume

of which he has not borrowed, to drape it, with picturesque effect, around the forms created by his own true German genius. But if he stepped away from the classical productions of Mozart and Beethoven, he brought his art into the world of general civilisation, and connected it with the poetry, the literature, and even the state of society of his day, and thereby raised his craft a step higher on the social ladder. There can be no doubt, in studying the pianoforte pieces mentioned above, that Weber has poured into them the stream of melody, which he had dammed up for his "Alcindor." Marches, airs, songs, choruses, all the offspring of dramatic ideas, may be detected throughout them. In none is this dramatic tendency more clearly evidenced than in the "Invitation to the Waltz."

"This interesting sketch," wrote Riehl again of the "Invitation of the Waltz," "has its historical value. It marks the transition of modern dance-music. The waltz had been previously a sort of mere animated minuet; but Weber threw a fiery allegro into the dance. The world ran faster: why should not people dance faster too? The feelings of the day reëchoed in the music. Formal dignity and pastoral affectations were gone; the simple, almost childish, sentimentality of the beginning of the century, with its pale insipid style of dancing, had sighed itself out. Weber bestowed upon his music a fine chivalric tone, mixed with human passions and feelings. With the fermenting excitement of passion are combined sparkling coquetry and soft dreaming, and

above all the pathos of love. Dignity and pleasant simplicity had both found their music in the ball-room—then why not love? Even the melancholy of love could afford movement for the dance, as long as rhythm and modulation were marked and energetic. Weber was the first founder of the dance-music expressive of deep feeling, and of a school of which Strauss was afterwards an acolyte. He showed how profoundly he was imbued with the spirit of his age; and thus even this composition has its deep historical significance."

Thus was Weber employed, slowly recovering from his illness, and from the weight thrown upon his spirit by his mortifications and disappointments, when, in the course of the summer, he had again the pain to see his services rejected on the occasion of another event, touching so nearly the royal family, to which he had formed a deep and genuine attachment. The charming Princess Maria Josepha Amalia, the youngest daughter of Prince Max, was to be married by proxy, on the 29th August, to King Ferdinand of Spain. The sweet innocent manners of this little Princess, then scarce sixteen years of age, had won all hearts, and more especially those of all the inhabitants of Pillnitz, who had known and played with her as a child. Weber loved her dearly: and it was his genuine devotion alone which could have urged him to take any spontaneous steps to obtain permission to compose the festal music for this new occasion. As yet it had been to Morlacchi that these honourable commissions had always been con-

fided: his own turn, thought Weber, could not but come now at last. The chief court-equerry, Count Vitzthum, had hitherto conducted the direction of the theatre, after the retirement of his brother; and through him Weber expressed his ardent desire. As usual, the petition was transmitted to cabinet minister Einsiedel. Six weeks passed without an answer; and at last came a message to say, "with Count Einsiedel's profound regrets," that capellmeister Morlacchi had already received a royal command to compose an Italian cantata for the occasion, to words, once more written by Geheimkämmerer Orlandi. Morlacchi, it may be here said, received for his two cantatas a brilliant snuff-box with the King's ciphers in diamonds, the presentation of which to a mere capellmeister, Count Vitzthum had been informed a year before, was contrary to all established rule of court etiquette.

To what mean trivialities the Italian party could descend in its hostility to the leading spirit of the detested German opera, and in its endeavours to degrade and depreciate Weber, whilst it brought honour and favour to its own capellmeister, was shown at this time most powerfully by the importance given to two small and seemingly unimportant occurrences. The one was the utterance of a harmless expression by Weber, seized upon by his adversaries to destroy at one blow any favour, into which he might be gradually rising, in the highest quarters; the other was a proceeding on the part of Morlacchi, which, if any intention resided in it at all, was utterly

devoid of taste and tact, but which gratified his party, and which was used to heap favour still more heavily into his already overladen balance.

It was publicly known that the King of Prussia was about to pay a visit to the Saxon Court, on the 1st August 1819, for the first time since the partition of Saxony; and it was soon bruited abroad that the King of Saxony had resolved to receive his former enemy on the steps of his country palace. A stream of people flowed to Pillnitz for the occasion. It was very manifest that a very strong feeling against the once hostile sovereign was abroad. Strict measures were therefore taken for the preservation of order: and a public announcement was made to the effect that the King would look upon any insult offered to his guest, as one given to himself. Morlacchi had been commanded to superintend the table-music, to be given in honour of the royal visitor. So Weber, with his wife, mixed in the crowd, which surrounded the château of Pillnitz, to witness the arrival. The King of Prussia drove up in an open travelling-carriage, accompanied by a single adjutant. A simple military cap covered his closely shorn head; over his plain uniform he wore a gray military cloak, which he let fall as he sprang out of the carriage, and ran up the steps, where the King of Saxony, with his brothers, stood ready to receive him. The King of Saxony, on the contrary, was in full court attire, with a gray satin coat adorned with diamond buttons, shoes with brilliant buckles, powdered wig and pigtail—the embodied picture of a prince of the past century in

all his majesty. The contrast so was powerful that Weber whispered to his wife the thought, which thousands on the spot may have felt, "Would not one think, to see this, that the Past and the Future were greeting each other?" A stillness of death reigned around. The words were heard, and were repeated. The expression of an artist mind was made to bear a deep political significance; and hateful malice transformed it into an utterance of disloyalty, which was to be reckoned among the poor German capellmeister's blackest sins.

What did Morlacchi? He began the table-music of the day with the overture of Rossini's "Gazza Ladra." The "thievish magpie" was looked upon as an allusion to the absorption of a portion of the Saxon dominions by Prussia; as such it was recognised by that country's sovereign, who was fully acquainted with the Italian music of the day. Unquestionably this trick was played without the knowledge of the King of Saxony, who was a man of much fine feeling, and who had given such severe orders that no insult should be offered to his guest. But the Italian party, regardless how far such a proceeding might have still more indisposed the already suspicious royal visitor, or how far it might have still more complicated the unsatisfactory relations between the two countries, chose to consider Morlacchi's impertinence as a patriotic deed of note. Praises were showered down upon him, as though he had done a great heroic action: he was the hero of the day.

Thus sorrow and annoyance, wrought by his un-

scrupulous adversaries, still trod closely upon Weber's heels during his country life in the year 1819. Some rays of sunshine would now and then pierce the overhanging clouds; and these were chiefly brought by welcome guests, who wandered to his quiet retreat. Among such guests was a young artist of uncommon talent, the tendency of whose genius seemed to point him out as Weber's worthiest successor on the romantic field of art. This was Heinrich Marschner. He had already the previous year despatched to the Saxon capellmeister his opera of "Henri IV. and D'Aubigné." Weber had studied with wonder and admiration this work of a young composer of two-and-twenty years of age. He had even resolved to give it on the Dresden boards, and had informed the artist of his intention. Hindrances, however, had come in the way: and it was almost with a feeling of uneasiness that he heard the stout young fellow, with a jovial red face, who suddenly appeared before him in his garden-arbour, leading an old lady by the hand, announce himself as Heinrich Marschner with his mother.

The rough manners and blunt address of the young composer were at first far from sympathetic to Weber, much as he liked plain straightforward speaking. But this impression was afterwards removed, when the two musicians came in closer contact by Marschner's appointment at Dresden. At all times, in after years, Weber spoke with the utmost respect of Marschner's talent, and was even led by a strange circumstance, prone as he always was to a belief in

presentiments and signs, to fancy that a strong mysterious sympathy existed between himself and the rising young man. It was in this wise. Many circumstances combined to delay the representation of "Henri IV. and D'Aubigné," until the summer of 1820. Marschner meanwhile, ever industrious, was occupied with other compositions, and had almost forgotten that his opera was still in Weber's hands. He was at Presburg, when, on the night of the 13th July 1820, he dreamed that he saw a full performance of his opera in the Dresden theatre under the direction of Weber. He heard every piece of music, heard the applause bestowed on this or that; and the next morning he related his singular impressive dream to his friend and patron Count Thaddäus von Amadée, and his mother. A few days afterwards he received a letter from Weber, giving him an account of the performance of his opera on the very night, and confirming his dream even in the most minute particulars.

Another visit of some note to Weber was that of the Berlin banker Mendelssohn-Bartholdi, not only an eminent philosopher, but an ardent worshipper of music, and a great admirer of Weber's genius. It is impossible now to ascertain, with any certainty, whether the celebrated man was accompanied on this visit by his still more celebrated son Felix, who was then a boy of ten years of age. A female friend of the Weber family, however, who was present at the time on a visit to Hosterwitz, has always declared, that she perfectly remembered a boy with black curly

hair, who played with the great hound and the raven in the garden.

Of more importance to Weber, although it did not take place until his return to his town-quarters, was his intercourse with Spohr, who spent a portion of the months of October and November at Dresden, for the purpose of giving a concert at court, previously to a visit to England. The two celebrated masters had never, as has already appeared, fully harmonised with each other. Weber, however, was far juster towards Spohr, than Spohr towards Weber. Spohr, for instance, would never acknowledge the true position of his young rival in the musical world, and insisted on ascribing all his success to his faculty of writing so as to be comprehended by the masses. Weber, on the contrary, spoke with admiration of Spohr's "Jessonda," but avowed that he generally considered his works cold. He looked upon him as a composer for the learned; as a violin-player, he placed Spohr above all. During Spohr's stay at Dresden, he did every thing to forward the artist's views, obtained for him the permission to play at court, arranged for him a concert at the theatre, invited all the artistic notabilities of Dresden to meet him and hear his music, and noted down in his diary the words, "Certainly Spohr is a great artist."

Meanwhile the "Jäger's Bride" was again rising to the surface of Weber's artistic life. Early in the July of 1819 Count Brühl had begged for a plan of Weber's new opera, with the intention of making an attempt to open with it the newly-erected theatre in

Berlin, generally known as the "Schauspielhaus." Count Brühl was anxious to make every preparation as long before the time of the opening as possible, inasmuch as competition for this occasion was to be feared not only on the part of Spontini, who had been newly engaged for the ensuing year, but of the still more redoubtable Goethe, who of his own accord had offered to write a work for the opening of the new house. The book of the "Jäger's Bride" was immediately despatched; and it was perused with so much delight by Count Brühl, that he entreated Weber to visit him at his country-seat of Seiffersdorf, and make every arrangement with him for the production of the opera in the coming spring.

All Weber's energy and activity were now once more bestowed upon his "Jäger's Bride." The pieces already mentioned were completed in every point. In September and November the terzett between Agathe, Max, and Aennchen, in the second act, and all the music of the Wolf's Glen, that most original of Weber's compositions, were ready. The charming duett between Agathe and Aennchen, and the lovely little air of the latter, which had sprung entire in their individuality, as it were, out of the composer's heart, were in turn fully completed. On the 6th December, Weber, on reviewing all that he had already done of his opera, was able to write to Brühl to inform him that the whole could be ready by March. But on this assurance Weber did not rest his oars. The endless materials which for years Weber had nourished in his heart, rolled in rich

profusion on the paper, like pearls from the hands of the divers rising from the jewel-chambers of the ocean. Agathe's great air now came; and her sweet song, "Und ob die Wolke sich verhülle," was born on the same day as the first gush of the bridesmaids' chorus,—immortal pieces both. In those prolific days this one spare man was forging powerful weapons, with which Germany was to win her great place of artistic honour in the history of the world.

On the 21st December came an announcement fully capable of damping Weber's now ardent spirit. Count Brühl wrote to say, that the opening of the new Berlin theatre was to be celebrated by a work of the great poet Goethe, but that the "Jäger's Bride" would, he trusted, be the first opera given on its boards. But Weber was now too rapidly borne forward on the wings of his excitement and inspiration to be checked in his course by slight disappointments. Heart and head were alike singing, and were not to be stilled. Once more the old joyous spirit of past days seemed to have been kindled within him. He wrote for the new-year's eve some of his genial comic verses of former times, to accompany presents to his friends, or to characterise the personages assumed, as in a twelfth-night masquerade, by himself and his guests on this festive occasion; and as he retired for the night, he penned in his diary the words, "And thus the year, which has brought so many sorrows, has ended gaily. May God give us his blessing, and grateful hearts for the strength bestowed on us to bear all his trials!"

CHAPTER VI.

WEBER'S GREAT YEAR OF CREATIVE POWER.

ORDERLY as Weber was in all things, he was never more so than in his visits of ceremony and congratulation. Not only did he keep a regular account-book of such visits, but he carefully marked down in each new almanac of the year all the days, such as birthdays, fête-days, and others, when it was considered "the proper thing" to wait upon the various members of the royal family, or upon his more immediate friends. Seldom did he fail, on such occasions, to pay his personal respects, or at least despatch a letter to express his congratulations. On new-year's day these attentions were invariably bestowed with a rigid exactitude, which entailed a painful amount of bodily fatigue. On the morning of the 1st January might Weber invariably be seen arraying himself in all the splendours of his court-uniform. It would have been difficult to find any mortal being upon whom the formal dress sat in more unbecoming fashion; and it was always with a sort of comical solemnity, in which he designedly displayed all his humour, that he put on his odious costume, smoothed

his silk-stockings, thrust his arms into his green gold-embroidered coat, buttoned his white waistcoat with gloves upon his hands, and stuck a diamond pin, presented him by the Grand Duke of Weimar, into a shirt-frill, the plaiting of which had given Caroline endless trouble. At last, when his spectacles were on his nose, and his face composed to a due solemnity, he would undertake the heaviest task of all—the tying of his white cravat. With the most punctilious care was the knot made, and then a magnificent rosette arranged in the centre. "What's the composition of an opera?" he would then cry to his wife, with joyous satisfaction; "mere boy's play! a very trifle! But I should like to see the man who can fashion a rosette as I can." Then he would turn again with a burst of laughter to the looking-glass, and say, "Upon my word, I ought to be stuck into a wax-figure show!" Of a truth, his long pale face, with the spectacles perched upon his lengthy nose, peering out of the high collar of his uniform, crowned the masquerade but sorrily. After a due "baise-main" to their Majesties and all the royal family, he would hurry home, change his dress, swallow his hasty dinner, and pay a host of visits, until late evening brought him back utterly exhausted with fatigue. No acquaintances of any class of society were forgotten, either by visit, friendly note, or new-year's gift. Never was a busier day in the whole year than that with which it commenced; but the orderly man had the pleasant conviction, that it had been inaugurated after the most orderly fashion.

Given as Weber was to a steady belief in good or bad omens, he conceived that the year 1820 had begun with an unusually favourable prognostic, when the first letter he opened, proved, to his surprise and pleasure, to be one from Morlacchi, in which his inveterate foe promised him that, for the future, all differences should be at an end between them, and that nothing but reciprocal confidence and straightforwardness should exist. By such friendliness Weber was sure to be disarmed. All the dark clouds upon his official horizon he considered swept away by this kind letter. He hurried to Morlacchi to thank him with all the fulness of his genial heart. It was not long, however, before Morlacchi's promise was treacherously broken.

Towards the end of the year 1819 Mayerbeer's opera, "Emma di Resburgo," had excited a great sensation in Venice. Weber, proud of his friend's talent, and always anxious to exhibit it in the most favourable light to the world, had already been studying up the young composer's "Alimelek" for the Dresden stage, with the feeling that the fundamental character of this opera was, at all events, thoroughly German. Now Mayerbeer had composed his "Emma di Resburgo" in Venice, under the influence of the prevailing musical tendencies of an Italian city, and with the desire of wringing applause from an Italian audience for a composer, who unhappily owed his birth to "that barbaric Germany." With his wonderfully fine faculty for seizing upon an individuality originally foreign to his own nature, Mayerbeer had

woven the whole texture of the Italian school into his work; severe musical critics might have said that it was not free from certain Italian reminiscences, and all too highly spiced in the Italian warehouse. Painfully as Weber was affected by the conviction that his friend, whom he had fondly looked upon as one of the chief pillars of the temple of German art, which he himself was striving to erect, should have taken a direction so contrary to what he considered the truest principles, he was nevertheless resolved to produce Mayerbeer's latest opera, and show that he was not utterly led away by overweening prejudices in art. Wishes, moreover, had been expressed in high quarters to hear an opera so suddenly risen into repute, and in the original Italian text. So Weber overcame his own scruples sufficiently to get the opera up with more than usual care and zeal, and produce it, in Italian, on the 26th January, giving it thus the precedence over the "Alimelek," which did not appear until the 22d February. Both operas were favourably received; but "Emma di Resburgo" alone with enthusiastic applause. Weber scarcely knew whether to be pleased or grieved. "Mayerbeer's opera," he wrote to Lichtenstein, "was received here with enthusiasm. This may not be the case at Berlin; but here we are completely Italianised. My heart bleeds to see a German artist, gifted with his own natural powers of creation, letting himself down to be a mere imitator, in order to catch the applause of the moment. I do not say that such applause should be despised; but it should not be the 'be-all and the

end-all.' May Mayerbeer still turn back from the erring path he has chosen!"

It was "Emma di Resburgo," then, which was to lead to the new collision, to which allusion has already been made. Two articles, upon Mayerbeer's two operas, were published by Weber in the *Abendzeitung*, and contained expressions similar to those made in his letter. "Italian artistic stomachs," ran one sentence, "must have peculiar powers of digestion, to have induced a genius like Mayerbeer's, so replete with independent powers of creation, not only to have placed nothing but the most luscious fruits upon his table, but to have sugared them over with all the fashion of the day." This phrase was looked upon as a side-blow dealt at the Italian party. It immediately took up arms again, with Morlacchi at its head. Not only was a fulminating article against the offending German written by his old enemy, Fräulein aus dem Winkel, the enthusiastic supporter of the Italian coterie, and published in the *Literary Mercury*, but official complaints were laid before Count Einsiedel, declaring that "the artistic honour of the Italians had been purposely attacked." The article not only contained critical abuses of all Weber's artistic exertions in Dresden, but accused him of wilful and self-interested prejudice against all that was Italian, employed even biting personal sarcasm, and concluded with the phrase, "The public must have works, not words; let the man show himself a real opera composer before playing the Aristarchus amongst us here."

The affair created an immense sensation. Not only was the whole operatic company in a state of the wildest agitation; but in all circles of Dresden society were the Italian and German parties once more in irritated collision. In the present practical days of industry, commerce, and political ideas, it is almost impossible to comprehend the frenzy of public antagonism upon matters connected only with the theatre. But in those days Dresden was divided into two artistic camps. Weber, still nervous and ailing, had doubtless been somewhat exaggerated in his remarks; and public opinion could not, as in some other instances, be wholly on his side. For once Count Einsiedel received the official complaints of the Italians without any marked favouritism. He probably saw that it was impossible to make a handle of such vague accusations, and only laughed in his sleeve; but he requested Weber to send him all the articles which had led to this dire strife; and this was done, a letter being at the same time written by Weber, entreating the Count to do him the grace of removing the false impressions doubtless made upon the mind of the King. At last Count Einsiedel's ill-humour was roused, however. He hated publicity; and the increasing public excitement angered him. The best resource he could find was in swamping the whole affair in the slough of official mystery. So he sent for Weber, assured him of the King's perfect satisfaction, some mark of which would be shortly given, and promised him to give the Italians "a regular set-down," provided he himself would hold his peace

and not pursue the matter further. Weber, far too lightly taken in by friendly assurances, consented. Count Einsiedel had obtained all he desired, and he took none of the promised steps. The whole affair was hushed in silence, except when, now and then, some sniggering Italian would declare that Weber had "caught it" from the minister, and was now obliged to "pull in his horns." The chief result was that Weber, who had been far more excited about the affair than it was worth, was again in a lamentable state of health. Caroline too, prematurely delivered of a dead child, was unable to recover her strength; and the winter seemed to be doomed to pass in sickness, sorrow, and vexation.

It was a mercy for Weber, then, that he should have been once more roused out of himself by visits from men whom he admired or respected for different reasons. Among them were Anton Bernhard Fürstenau, the celebrated flute-player, the well-known acoustic professor Chladni, Nepomuck Hummel, and the younger son of Weber's great ideal in art, Mozart. With what deep emotion he pressed the hand of the son of his immortal predecessor, in whose features he found a resemblance to his lamented father, may well be conceived. He entertained a profound pity also for the worthy man who had committed the imprudence of attempting to follow in the steps of a father impossible to reach, and who was thus always crushed by the burden of his father's name. As an independent artist he might have occupied a tolerably high position; as his father's son, he was forced down

by comparison into one far below him. For his father's sake Weber stretched forth a hand to elevate him to his true level, had him constantly in his house, invited influential persons to hear him play, and thus procured him the advantage of performing at court.

It appears to have been Hummel's presence in Dresden which led to a pleasant musical evening at the palace of Prince Friedrich, afterwards Co-Regent and King of Saxony, who was accustomed to collect around him artists and men of science, and mix with them as a private gentleman—the evening when, except in Weber's own room, the first tones of "Der Freischütz" were heard by uninitiated ears. The first notes put on paper by the composer belonged to the music of Aennchen; and, in similar way, it was the duett between Aennchen and Agathe which was first given to this select little public. The choice was not a happy one. Dramatic as is the effect of this duett, combined with stage-business and scenic accessories, it is exactly one of the pieces of "Der Freischütz" least adapted for production in concert form. The result was unavoidable: although excellently well sung, the duett made but little impression on the audience of the evening.

One little event of this period ought not to be left unrecorded, since it gives testimony to the kindliness and nobility of Weber's character. The scoundrel Huber, whose baseness and villany had plunged his too confiding master into such a slough of misery at Stuttgart, and caused the bitterest

misfortune of his whole life, had the impudence to knock at the door of the man he had deceived, as he passed through Dresden during the winter, and beg for charity in his deep distress. Weber gave the wretched fellow food, money, clothes, and in his magnanimity never mentioned to his wife that the man he treated thus kindly was the author of all his misery and disgrace, until he was long since gone.

Another instance of his delicacy of mind, which claims a place as highly characteristic of the man, was given about the same period. The zeal which Weber had displayed in his production of Mayerbeer's "Emma di Resburgo" and of "Alimelek," and the troubles and cares he had undergone in consequence, had reached the ears of the good Beers in Berlin. They had learned too, by chance, that Weber had once expressed the wish to possess silver candle-branches for his table; and a magnificent present of the kind was despatched from Berlin by the kind-hearted and wealthy pair, with a letter for Weber, expressing their gratitude for all that he had done. The capellmeister was placed in the most painful embarrassment. He feared to wound the feelings of much-loved friends by a refusal of their gift; but he feared still more to subject himself, by acceptance, to imputations which hostile malice would be sure to cast in his teeth. Lest his good Caroline's heart should be wrung by the sight of the splendours, which he was resolved to reject, he never opened the chest, and returned it again to the Beers with a letter, in which the finest

tact, as well as the truest sense of honour, were displayed. "Pardon me, if I venture to refuse your gift," he wrote, amidst a hundred affectionate expressions of gratitude. "But never must a doubt be allowed to arise as to the purity of my intentions, either as regards your dear family or our beloved art." This letter was not allowed, by the three sons then at home, to reach their parents' eyes. The well-meaning young men once more sent the chest to Dresden, and begged Weber to re-consider his resolution, and not to grieve the kind donors. But the capellmeister's sense of honour was too strong to allow him to yield to these entreaties. Again was the chest returned, with another letter to the sons, in which Weber endeavoured to show how independent of his true love for their parents was the feeling which dictated the refusal. The result of this little difference showed the justness of Weber's views. After some further complications, caused by the delays in the correspondence, the worthy Beers consented to receive back their present, with the assurance that they honoured highly the feelings of the rejecter, and that the sentiments of friendship between them would remain as firm as ever.

Spite of all the disappointments and mortifications of the time, Weber meanwhile was still struggling, almost against hope, to place his German opera upon a footing of eminence. The director of his newly-created chorus having been discharged, he was desirous of seeing his friend Miksch appointed to the post; although at the time an altercation ex-

isted between himself and the surly old gentleman. Miksch, in fact, had been engaged by Weber to give singing-lessons to his wife; but finding that the celebrated singing-master was, in his opinion, forcing Caroline's voice too high, Weber had ventured to expostulate. Miksch was exasperated at this criticism, threw up his instruction in a pet, and showed his irritation in every way to the capellmeister. But Weber was not the man to be swayed in his sense of duty by any petty differences. He believed in the great talent of Miksch; and he had the joy of obtaining the post of director of the chorus for the "right man," and of seeing a marked improvement in the establishment under the conduct of so admirable a musician.

In his wish Weber had been ably seconded by the new general director of the theatre, Geheim-Rath von Könneritz, who had been appointed to the post after the ultimate resignation of Count Vitzthum. Hans Heinrich von Könneritz was a man of sound good sense and steadiness. He showed, it is true, a marked tendency in favour of Italian opera. But he was sensible enough to meet Weber half way in all his efforts; if he did not foster and elevate them with all the energies of his mind, as Vitzthum had done before him. He was too just a man, moreover, to show preference to any person because he might stand higher in court favour; and it was with a smile of pleasure beaming over his handsome well-chiselled features, that he afterwards announced to the surprised capellmeister the consent of the King,

at the request of the Queen, to the arrangement of the orchestra, before so harshly denied, according to Weber's own plans and wishes. With equal amiability did Könneritz forward the German capellmeister's views relative to new engagements, of which the most notable was that of the admirable tenor Gerstäcker, so as to assist the strength of the German opera as regarded vocal excellence.

But not alone were the fortunes of the German opera now occupying Weber's active energies. The "Jäger's Bride" was still to be completed. News had reached the composer that the new Schauspielhaus in Berlin would probably be opened before the end of the season of 1820; and it was necessary that the destined opera should be ready. The overture, that marvel of all German orchestral compositions, breathing forth the finest breath of German art, was commenced to be sketched out on the 22d of February, although never completed until the 13th of May. The "Huntsman's Chorus," and the beautiful "entre-acte," which leads to the most pious strain ever sung upon a stage, "Und ob die Wolke sich verhülle," were completed in March. On the 18th of April, a finishing hand was given to the "Wolf's Glen," one of the most daring musical ventures of modern days, for the effect of which Weber trembled to the last, more than for that of any thing he had ever composed, but which ultimately proved the "bouquet" of success in that great brilliant musical firework. The glorious finale, so full of light, and love, and faith, was completed early in

May. On the 13th of that month the last note of the opera was written. In the whole work there was not one weak place. From the first to the last the pulse of Weber's genius had beat with unremitting fervour and intensity. In the revision of his score, he himself cannot have found a single fault; for in the glorious manuscript, presented by his wife, after Weber's death, to the Royal Library at Berlin, not one single correction, not one single erasure of any one note is to be found. The notes seem to have rolled upon the paper like the purest pearls, as if conjured up by magic, and not written by mortal hand; and, certainly, the powerful concentration of mind, which permitted a man to write down such a work without the slightest blemish, belongs to one of the greatest phenomena of man's nature.

All now was ready; and on the 8th May the score was despatched to the director of the Berlin theatre, in order that the study of the choruses, in which so much of the principal effect of the work lay, might be commenced as soon as practicable. Immediately on arrival, the "Jäger's Bride" was destined to be re-baptised. In a letter from Brühl to Weber, acknowledging the receipt of the score, the former complains of the title as weak and colourless, and urges the adoption of that originally belonging to the legend, "Der Freischütz," as more analogous to the wild romantic spirit of the subject. To this suggestion Weber at once consented. The half of the remuneration of eighty Friedrichs-d'or, for which Weber had arranged, on the cession of the opera to

the court theatre of Berlin, was sent in June; and on deduction of the sixty ducats paid to Kind for the book, the sum of 388 thalers alone remained for Weber's share—a sum which was afterwards increased.

Scarcely was this affair settled, when another was immediately in hand. In the year 1812, as has been seen, Weber had made the acquaintance of Pius Alexander Wolff, at Weimar. This acquaintance had been renewed in Berlin, in the year 1816. A similarity of views as to the true purposes of art had brought the two remarkable men into a closer intimacy, which soon ripened into a friendship. As an actor, Weber placed Wolff on the highest pinnacle, even above Devrient the elder, in spite of that classical style of execution, which formed such a contrast to Weber's own romantic views. As an author, in which capacity Wolff descended from his statuesque pedestal of Weimar dramatic art, to be one of the romantic school, and appeal more directly to the human heart, he naturally prized him highly, and looked upon him as the dramatic prophet, destined to sweep from the stage the false glitter of the day. Wolff had long since completed his drama of "Preciosa," and sent it to Iffland, with music by Eberwein. It had been rejected, on the score of being "likely to create a false interest in the robber bands infesting the neighbourhood of Berlin." Since then the piece had lain dormant; until Brühl had urged the author to apply to Weber for better music. The application was made: and Weber consented to entertain the proposition, coming from two such

friends; although, as he wrote, he had sworn to compose incidental music to dramas no more.

The book of "Preciosa" had reached Weber early in March. Although deeply occupied with his opera, he could not refrain from perusing it. It appeared to him rather false and forced in idea; but the romantic tone of the subject, so different in colouring also to that of "Der Freischütz," took a firm hold on Weber's mind. His love for musical treatment of exotic national manners aided this feeling; whilst the contrast between life and love in the forests of Bohemia and the mountains of Spain, between the pious German Jäger and the wild sunburnt descendants of the Egyptian children of sin, at once inspired his fancy. The national melodies of the Spanish soldiers, heard by him at Gotha, in the year 1812, again floated through his brain. Books on gipsy-life were soon in his hands, and, little by little, Weber's mind was powerfully entranced by a work which he had at first been inclined to cast aside. Weber began his labours on the "Preciosa" on the 25th of May, almost immediately after he had written down the last note of "Der Freischütz." For the great opera it doubtless proved an advantage, that a smaller work should have appeared some months earlier before the world, containing many of those daring musical technicalities which had been ventured on by the composer in the former. "Preciosa" eventually appeared so obviously to be the precursor of the "Freischütz," and so evidently to contain the first blossoms of its more fully developed ideas, that it

is no wonder critics should insist that "Preciosa" must have been the first composed.

The use of national melodies, which had previously struck on the composer's ears in the "Preciosa," has always been a contested point, as regards his originality. It appears evident, however, that such motives served no more than to give a certain direction to his ideas in the creation of his work, as did the landscape, the fog, or the grotesque grouping of inanimate objects, which were transformed into tones and harmonies in his brain. By many Weber has been accused of borrowing the motive to one of his melodies in "Der Freischütz" from Louis Böhner, although Böhner himself has always repudiated with energy the idea of any such plagiarism. Such a motive is but a handful of salt, which, dissolved in the bright flood of genius, is re-formed into a rainbow crystal—a shapeless dust, which in its transformation sparkles like a precious stone. Thus the foreign motives of the "Preciosa" became, in transmutation through Weber's brain, crystals, sparkling on every side with all the German essence of German romance.

It is singular enough that of all the music of "Preciosa," and even before the whole was sketched, the overture was completed first. No greater proof can be found, than in the fact that this overture, which, like all his later ones, contains the essence of all the leading ideas of the subject, was first made to appear in its entirety, how completely all the several parts and motives of his work must have been in the composer's mind before they were put on paper. A

space of forty days alone exists between the completion of the two overtures of "Der Freischütz" and "Preciosa." With what feelings must the master have looked back upon this extraordinary period of his life! On the 20th of July the whole score of "Preciosa" was despatched to Brühl, together with a lengthy notice to Wolff, relative to the nature, meaning, and musical character to be given to each separate piece, the precise introduction of every phrase of the melodramatic music during the declamation, and more especially of the effect of the echo, and of the movements and "stage-business" of the gipsy-band during the repetition of the voices in the distance.

Far from being exhausted, Weber's productive spirit was now wholly aroused; but, after its flight into such mystic and romantic regions, it yearned for lighter, brighter scenes, where genial humour reigned. After his long works with heavy scores for full orchestra, Weber conceived a great longing for the composition of some little comic opera for a small orchestra, into which he might pour the endless stream of pretty rippling melodies which he felt constantly springing up in his brain. His wishes were gratified by the receipt of a pretty little book from his friend Theodor Hell, to which he himself gave the title of "The Three Pintos." The libretto Weber purchased at the price of twenty ducats. Up to the termination of his life this little opera was his constant companion. He was resolved to pour all his richest stores of melody and humour into it. The

greater part of these stores he treasured in his brain. When that brain was still, they passed away for ever.*

But now he regarded his pleasant little comic opera as sympathetic summer work; and he looked out for a congenial birthplace for it. The multiplicity of his official duties, and the state of his health, were alike opposed to so distant a residence as that near Pillnitz. After much vain seeking, he at last found a comfortable pavilion, with the name of "Kosel's Garden," in the Anton Faubourg, lying close upon the Elbe, and in the neighbourhood of the Linkesches Bad. The spacious grounds around it, studded with fine old trees, offered lonely walks, where, amidst the shade of the verdure, and by the murmur of the stream, he could enjoy the fresh air. A pleasant path led, in less than half an hour's walk, to the theatre. This country residence of Weber exists no longer. So impatient was Weber to find himself at rest in this congenial dwelling, that he quitted his town residence as early as the 13th of April—too early, it proved; for it chilled his whole frame to hear the mighty boughs of the old trees cracking beneath the howling winds of the stormy springtide. Caroline shuddered, too, to think that the road would lead her husband, when he returned late after the theatre, past the very spot where a murder had been committed only a few months before. To ease her fears Weber was always armed with a pair of good

* The score of the first act of this opera, which Weber took with him to England, was never recovered after his death.

pistols and a sword-stick, which he afterwards almost invariably carried. He exercised himself too in pistol-shooting; a practice which delighted him, and in which he was fond of showing his great proficiency to the young officers who were his guests. But, spite of these drawbacks, and the loss of his favourite intercourse with the "Liederkreis," there is no doubt that his change of residence was advantageous for his work as well as his health.

Meanwhile the completion of the Berlin Schauspielhaus was still delayed far beyond the expected period. Spontini, moreover, who had found his life in Paris unsupportable from constant collision with other artists, had been engaged as capellmeister, at the express desire of the King, under most advantageous conditions, and with an enormous salary. The stern, proud, cold composer arrived in Berlin in the month of May 1820, and soon used his influence in the musical direction of the royal theatre to such an extent that he might have been looked upon as the general commander-in-chief of the whole great musical army of Berlin. The colossal preparations made for the representation of his pompous operas had so absorbed, not only all the resources of the theatre, but the attention and interest of all dilettanti, that there could be little thought of a poor German opera by a poor German composer, even had the Schauspielhaus been complete. So Weber determined, under the circumstances, to use his leave of absence by taking an autumn journey in the North of Germany and Denmark, in such quiet wise as to make

it at the same time a tour for the recovery of his health. His partial remuneration for "Der Freischütz" gave him the courage to risk the expenses connected with a journey on which he was resolved that his wife should have the pleasure of accompanying him; but with his usual caution, to make matters sure, he disposed of a mass of compositions, the most important of which, perhaps, was his Jubilee Cantata, with its immortal overture, but almost all of which proved highly remunerative to Schlesinger the publisher, for the far from adequate sum of one thousand thalers. With letters of recommendation he was magnificently provided by his good friends the Grand Duke of Weimar, the Duke of Gotha, and others.

On the 25th July, Weber and his beloved wife drove away from their quiet home with hopeful and cheery spirits. In Leipsic nothing was to be done but to visit affectionate old friends, among whom Rochlitz and his wife were the dearest to Weber's heart; but here Weber first made the acquaintance of Gottlieb Reissiger, the talented composer, who was destined afterwards to become his successor as German capellmeister at Dresden. Weber's first artistic essay was to be made at Halle. Among the youth of the German universities the genial German composer had always been popular; he was aware of the enthusiasm with which his songs were sung by all true German students; and he looked forward to a concert at Halle as full of promise of success. Nor were his expectations disappointed. The enthusiasm which prevailed throughout the whole population of the university,

and especially among the student crew, as soon as the arrival of the great composer of "Lyre and Sword" was known, was immense. Friends among the professors and scientific men, with whom happened to be at the time the Danish poet Oehlenschläger, flocked round him with eager protestations, and insisted upon taking all the trouble of the preparations for the expected concert off his hands. The concert-hall was crammed to suffocation. Not only had professors and students crowded to it; but all the population for many miles around had assembled to hear and see the illustrious and much-beloved German master. The applause on Weber's entry into the room was a triumphant shout of jubilee. The gratified composer was profoundly affected. In his eyes his reception was a festival in honour of his fatherland and his art. "Would," cried Weber to some friends, "that I could hear my own songs sung from the very hearts of these brave German youths!" His wish was gratified. The university of Halle was very musically disposed, and had several "Singvereine" among the students. About ten o'clock in the evening more than 400 students assembled before the house occupied by the honoured and beloved guest. After a "vivat," which seemed almost interminable, several of Weber's songs were sung in full chorus by the assembled multitude. To Weber this impromptu ovation sounded like a blessing on his journey—a happy omen for his future course. He left Halle in the highest spirits, loaded with presents of works from the literary celebrities of the university

to that extent, that he laughingly exclaimed, "I must surely look like a bookseller's bagman."

After a small "patriarchal" concert at pretty little Alexisbad, to which Weber had been attracted partly by the beauty of the spot, and partly by the invitation of his friend Major von Alvensleben, who with his wife and servants took all the business of the concert upon himself, the travellers arrived on the 11th July at Göttingen. Here again was a German university—here were again enthusiastic young German hearts: and here again the honoured composer experienced a reception which filled his own German heart with patriotic delight, whilst it could not but be flattering to his legitimate pride as artist. Honours were again showered upon him by all the circle of the professors; and every morning hundreds of students assembled before his hotel, to bring their beloved composer a "vivat," and form, with heads all bared, a lane through which he passed, as he went forth. Again was his concert-hall crammed to its utmost limits. When all was over, he was on all sides surrounded by eager students seeking the honour of shaking him by the hand. In vain he sought a little rest in his hotel. Before his windows stood a torch-bearing crowd of students, who sang to him in chorus his "Songs of Freedom," and then, with shouts, demanded to see him, speak to him once more. When he appeared among them to thank them for the honour done him, the shouts seemed never to find an end. In spite of the simple manner in which Weber related the occurrence in a letter to his friend Roth,

it is clear that he was greatly touched. The contrast with his Dresden life could not escape him either. "If I am every where to be warmed by such fire as this," he wrote in the same letter, "I can console myself for the cold chill thrown on me in Dresden."

But the overwhelming excitement and exertion were almost too much for Weber's weak physical powers. On his arrival at Hanover he was completely prostrated: and his little wife was thoroughly overcome. Both were too ill to render it possible to give a concert; and, on all the past occasions, Caroline had won her meed of applause by her charming singing in the concert-room. The indisposition of the latter too was much increased by an accident which happened on the road to Bremen. The heat was great: postillion, as well as travellers, had slept: and the carriage had been overturned into a ditch. Spite his indisposition, and his scanty strength, Weber displayed upon this occasion the usual energy of his character. He revived the stunned postillion, undid the luggage from the roof, unharnessed the horses, put every thing together in its place again, and then, rather than trust the still-bewildered postillion, mounted himself upon the box, and drove the carriage to the next station. It was long before Caroline was able to recover the effects of this disaster. Fortunately, at a concert given, by special desire of the Duke Regent, at the court of Oldenburg, she was so far restored as to be able to enchant her princely audience by some of her husband's most charming songs, and to have almost carried off the palm from

the celebrated artist himself, had he not raised so much wonder and admiration by his improvisation on a theme, given him by the Hereditary Princess, that he won the day in the marital rivalry.

The artistic tour now lay over Bremen and Hamburg. In the former commercial city, the concert proved, as usual, highly remunerative. "The merchants of the place," wrote Weber to Kind, "are accustomed to go out to their country residences on Saturdays. But they all remained in town, and formed a numerous and highly appreciative public." After the concert, a festal supper was inaugurated in Weber's honour in the Raths Keller. But in Hamburg all artistic plans were obliged, for the present at least, to be renounced. Caroline was again ill; she was once more about to be a mother. All further exertion was forbidden her; and Weber was obliged to give up his fondly cherished plan of making the whole journey with his beloved wife. It was with sad and heavy hearts that the resolution was taken for their parting. The suffering woman was safely bestowed in the house of a friendly physician, with every attention and comfort around her. But it was with the utmost difficulty that Weber could persuade himself to leave her. The afflicting parting took place, however; and Weber went on his way, showering daily letters of the utmost love, and care, and tenderness on his sweet partner, whenever he could find table, pen and ink, to pour out his soul to her.

In Hamburg, Weber had found, after a long

separation, his elder brother Fritz, at that time musical director of the town; and, on the 10th August, both started together for Lubeck, to meet and greet their brother Edmund. From thence the three brothers drove over to Cutin, Carl Maria's birthplace, where they revived their associations of early childhood in every street, and visited, with reverence, the little low-built house in which the now illustrious composer had been born. Utterly unknown to Weber, the Cutiners, proud of their celebrated compatriot, had rubbed up all their musical acquirements to do him honour. They almost forced him to give them a concert, for which every arrangement had already been made; and although, as Weber himself notes, neither his own execution, nor the manner in which his pieces were given, could be considered in any way praiseworthy, they so overwhelmed him with honours, in the enthusiasm of their patriotism, that he was glad at last to make his escape. In the town library of Cutin is now preserved the album of Stadt Musikus Fürstenau, in which Weber, on this occasion, inscribed his autograph, with the device, "Perseverance leads to success."

Weber's way now lay to Copenhagen; and from his godfather, the Landgrave Carl of Hesse, who then resided at Schleswig, he had hoped to obtain letters of recommendation which could be of notable service to him in the Danish capital. He had written previously to the prince to apprise him of the hopes of his "respectful godson." But his expectations can scarcely have been realised on his reception by his

loving godfather. The prince received him at Luisenlund, lying in bed, spoke to him pleasantly, handed over to him a letter to the master of the household at Copenhagen, and then bade him adieu.

In Kiel, where adverse winds detained him for three days, Weber gave another concert, the success of which was far from gratifying. For once the youth of the university showed no enthusiasm; and the pecuniary result was poor in the extreme. During the miserable days at Kiel, when the steamer, which was to convey Weber to Copenhagen, was unable to put in from the stormy state of the weather, he speaks, in his long and constant letters to his wife, with some bitterness of his disappointment, amidst his expressions of tenderness and anxiety for her. His impatience for the loss of every day which might delay his return to his "treasure," by even that brief space of time, was very difficult to bear. "Only a day, I say! but, good heavens, how long a day is to me now!" he wrote to his wife.

At last the long-expected steamer arrived; and, for the first time in his life, this man, so strongly moved by all the impressions conveyed by nature, saw before him all the majesty of marine scenery. "I left land," he wrote to his wife, "by a splendid moonlight and a bright starry heaven. The receding shore with its glaring lighthouse had a magical effect. . . . The waves were rough, however, and the wind blew hard; and the poor landsman had to pay his tribute to Neptune. But how great were the glories of the rising sun! They repaid for all. . . . How

many a blessing did I waft to my own dear one on that great greeting of the morning!"

In Copenhagen, Weber was so well received by all to whom he bore letters of recommendation, and found every thing in the way of business so pleasantly facilitated to him by Oehlenschläger, who had preceded him from Halle, and others, that, as he noted, he could not but fear "the deuce must be in it somewhere." And so it turned out. He found that his court concert, fixed for the 27th September, caused considerable unpleasantness, inasmuch as a Swedish piano-player, greatly patronised, would be thus thrust back. On making this discovery, Weber, although impatient of every moment lost, gallantly renounced the proffered precedence, and resolved to wait. But he lost nothing by his disinterested conduct. His intercourse with all the most illustrious and learned men of the Danish capital—his experiences among the members of the Copenhagen choir, which he ranked very high—his flattering reception in the best circles of society—his enjoyment of the beauties of the city, the elegance of its social life, and the excellence of its material enjoyments—for Weber was never a despiser of the pleasures of the table—all combined to animate him, and afford him agreeable means of checking his impatience. "It is impossible to be more *fêté* than I am here," he wrote: "the memory of these days will long cheer me, when I shall find it so far otherwise at home."

On the 27th September Weber was presented to King Frederik VI. and his Queen, at the château of

Frederiksborg. Weber was enchanted with his reception. "My darling," he wrote to Caroline, "I must own that on this occasion I have been faithless to you; this charming Queen has completely won my heart." Weber's public concert at Copenhagen promised to be a splendid one. "I have been stormed for tickets," he wrote again; "Jews and other speculators have besieged me for boxes, which they want to sell again at a higher price, in consequence of the great demand. But I was up to these tricks, as I have myself a Jew, who undertakes all my affairs." On the 4th October Weber's concert at court, delayed by his own good feeling, at last took place. He played his "Rondo Brillante" and his "Phantasie," on the theme "Vien quà Donna bella;" and the success was even beyond his hopes. It was in excellent spirits then that he wrote to his good wife of all his Copenhagen life, his delights and his successes. A handsome gold snuff-box was sent him from the court. It might be supposed that a more direct pecuniary recompense would have pleased Weber better, for he again laughingly writes: "It is a fine affair, certainly; but what am I to do with all these sort of things?" The public concert too was, even beyond his expectations, remunerative. Honour and applause were enough to content the most exacting of artists. But scarcely had the last note sounded, when Weber was off and away. His impatience could no longer be held in any leash. By the 13th September Weber was at Lubeck. Here, although suffering from a severe cold, mad with impatience to see

his wife once more, and anxious not to outstay the strict term of his leave of absence, he was induced by his brother Edmund to give what he calls "a miserable concert." But by the earliest dawn next day Weber was up and off, like an escaped convict, knowing no rest until he reached Hamburg, and was again folded in the arms of his beloved wife, after this, the first separation of their young marriage.

The health of Caroline was very much restored; and all seemed to smile on Weber during his stay in Hamburg. Kind and even beloved friends were around him. His concert was in every way successful. If his creative powers were not taxed, his musical activity at all events never for a moment flagged. He loved to wander on the quays, and listen to the monotonous chant of the sailors of different nations at their work; such sounds always suggested varied musical effects. In many ways he found happiness and rest for his mind. But the yearning for the own dear nest at home was always uppermost in Weber's heart; and on the 25th October the pair, refreshed in body and in spirit, turned their faces southwards.

Two little domestic incidents had characterised the stay of the Webers at Hamburg. In one of the houses of refreshment on the quays Weber had cured his wife of her antipathy to oysters. "There can be no real sympathy between us," he said laughingly one day, "as long as you detest a food I relish. For the love of me swallow this oyster." The reluctant Caroline obeyed with a dreadful grimace. "Another,"

commanded Weber. The grimace was less strong. Caroline needed no command for the third, and swallowed a whole dozen. In after-days Weber would say with a comic sigh, "Why did I ever teach you the trick, you glutton!" Another day a delicate little monkey attracted the attention of the wandering couple. He made such characteristic faces, scratched himself with such an air of serious reflection behind the ear, and looked altogether so like a not-much-esteemed acquaintance, that purchase him they must. "Schnuff," as the future favourite was called, was "a little devil," according to Weber's dictum, "but worth all his weight in gold." Not that master Schnuff made a favourable start in his domestic intercourse with the Weber family. Caroline's condition rendered short-days' journeys necessary; and by this arrangement they were obliged to sleep one night in a small Hanoverian town. The room in which they were lodged was spectral in its aspect; the fire snorted on the wide hearth; the windows rattled in the gusty wind. They crept to bed chilled with the ghostly and lugubrious aspect of the apartment. Presently they were waked from their first slumber by a rustling sound, then a strange knocking. Weber sprang from the bed, seized his pistols, and flung open the door. Nothing was to be heard in the dark passage but the howling of the wind. Again those strange unearthly sounds. A light was struck. A search was made round the room, while Caroline lay shivering with fear. Nothing was to be seen; but still those sounds. At last

the mystery was solved. Master Schnuff, who had been forgotten, lay in his travelling-chest upon his back, tormented by a simian nightmare. After a hearty laugh, the wearied couple again were able to rest from their spectral terrors.

After a brilliant concert in Brunswick, the Webers reached on the 4th November their happy home, which had been carefully tended in their absence by a kind friend; and Weber found to his satisfaction that, all the expenses of his journey deducted, he was some 600 thalers richer than when he started. By the 9th he was again to be seen in the orchestra, conducting Mozart's "Seraglio."

Their agreeable circle of friends was now assembled around the Webers; and all was cheery for the time. Their joint fête-day, on the 19th November, was celebrated by pleasant jests and comical festivities. In the early morning a masquerade procession, arranged with infinite humour and cleverness by Caroline, was ushered into the composer's room. His large dog had been transformed, to his own great discomfort, into an elephant, the gray cat into a donkey with panniers, whilst Master Schnuff marched proudly behind with hooped petticoat, hat and feathers, and a muff. Weber was convulsed with laughter. In the evening forfeits were played by the merry pair, in the midst of their choicest friends; in the game the delinquents were compelled to have their noses painted with brick-dust, and to be adorned with corked moustachios and whiskers. With such harmless jesting the great composer of "Der Frei-

schütz" was "as happy as a king;" "far, far happier," he would say. To add to Weber's joyous humour, two of his oldest and dearest friends visited Dresden towards the close of the year 1820. The one was Mayerbeer, the other Bärmann.

The purpose of Bärmann's stay was to give a concert; and in order to increase the attraction of his friend's speculation, Weber resolved that on this occasion the overture to his "Der Freischütz" should be given for the first time. A considerable curiosity, as may be naturally supposed, had been excited relative to Weber's much-talked-of new opera, not only among his friends and in musical circles, but in the general public, which often pursued its interest about the German capellmeister even to the most intolerable indiscretion relative to his private and domestic affairs. About the opera the most contradictory reports were afloat. Every place in the concert-room had been bought up long before the evening; and clever as was the celebrated clarionette-player, the whole interest of the evening was absorbed in the one object of general attention. The overture to "Der Freischütz" began. The audience listened in wrapt silence. But the novelty of many of the instrumental effects astonished them rather than pleased; the melodies did not seize at once upon their ears; the meaning of the whole they did not seem to grasp. They saw critics and musicians shake their heads with doubt, much as they may have smiled now and then upon the irresistible charm of the flow of melody; and as the last notes of the wondrous over-

ture faded away, the applause was scanty. Such was the first impression made by this masterpiece. But Weber was neither dissatisfied or cowed. He had drunk-in every drop of his magic potion, and knew its working. "I am prepared to hear," he wrote to Lichtenstein, "that there is much which was never known on any stage before, much which will not be comprehended at once; but, please God, I have hit the right thing."

The year was drawing to a close—the year so rich to Weber in artistic productiveness; and on looking back, the contented composer was fully satisfied with the pecuniary results of the past months. To those who can now gauge the value of the immortal works, the musician's gains seem lamentably small. The pianoforte arrangement of "Der Freischütz" was sold to Schlesinger, after much characteristic haggling on the part of the publisher, for 220 thalers.

The year was drawing to a close; and in its retrospect, Weber could not but feel that, even in reluctant Dresden, he had risen greatly in the estimation of his public. To this result an incident had unexpectedly contributed—an incident startling enough in itself, but proving, at the same time, how much more the masses are apt to be struck with a trick than with a work of art. Two of Weber's artistic characteristics were his great love for Mozart, and his strong musical memory. One night the "Zauberflöte" was to be given. The performance was about to begin, when it was found that, by some mistake, the conductor's score was not upon his desk.

The musicians were all in a state of terror. The court might enter at any moment; and it was well known that, in the eyes of the punctual Friedrich August, it would have been an unpardonable transgression, had not the opera commenced at the very moment. This terror reached the public. Caroline saw the empty desk, and trembled in her seat. Weber entered the orchestra, was made aware of the terrible disaster, but smiled on the band to the surprise of all, and quietly despatched a messenger for the missing score. The court entered—the desk was still empty—Weber gave a glance at his pale frightened wife to reassure her, raised his baton, and conducted the whole first act of the opera—with his usual fire, and without a fault—out of his head; amusing himself, at the same time, by pretending to turn over the pages of the score in pantomimic action, at the due places. Mozart's opera had grown to be a portion of his own flesh and blood. The fact was known; and from many members of the royal family Weber received the most flattering acknowledgments of this wonderful proof of his heart's memory.

During the year now terminating, also, Weber's dramatic faculties had been more than usually attracted to the works of the stage by his constant attendance at the readings of the celebrated poet Tieck. They were held in the poet's own roomy apartments, where the great man would constantly read a whole five-act piece, frequently without a pause, and with undiminished intensity. But Tieck never permitted

the slightest movement during his reading: a mere rustling would irritate him; and Weber, with his constitutional nervous excitement and restless disposition, must have felt the deepest interest in the dramatic lecture to have endured so painful a constraint so often. As a thoroughly practical man, however, Weber was far from agreeing in the views entertained by Tieck as to the exercise of the dramatic art—views which, in his eyes, were not only too ideal to be rendered possible, but were too far sundered from the progressive spirit of the times. When, in after years, Tieck was called upon to influence the workings of the Dresden stage, Weber looked upon his direction as prejudicial in many ways; and he saw his opinion justified by the result. But as a reader, when Tieck created the dramatic characters of a play out of his own heart and soul as it were, Weber looked upon him with the greatest admiration, and listened to his dramatic revelations like a child; for here the superb ideal came into no direct collision with necessary practical experience. To these readings, which dealt, about this period, with Calderon and others of the great Spanish dramatic poets, may be ascribed, then, quite as much as to his composition of his "Preciosa," and his fondness for his "Three Pintos," Weber's continually increasing prepossession in favour of Spanish subjects for operas. He occupied himself constantly on episodes of Spanish history, with an eye to a powerful tragic opera, and at last fixed his attention on the story of the "Cid," of which Kind drew up a dramatic plan. The

brilliant Moorish-Castilian colouring of such a subject, with its chivalric majesty, greatly affected Weber's fancy; and it would have been a blessing for art had his efforts been employed in this direction rather than upon the dull and feeble libretto of "Euryanthe;" but, on the appearance of Aiblinger's "Rodrigo and Ximene" in Munich, the idea of the Cid was wholly laid aside.

Other results also arose from Weber's intercourse and dramatic controversies with Tieck. For a time he again took in hand his long-neglected novel, "Artists' Wanderings," and worked upon it at occasional intervals. For Tieck's version of the "Merchant of Venice," reduced to three acts, he wrote also, at the poet's desire, a trio for female voices. And finally, by Tieck's influence was occasioned that profound study of Drieberg's "Music of the Greeks," which rendered Weber a master of controversy on the subject of ancient instruments and their effects.

The year had scarcely closed, when a new interest was awakened in Weber's life by the arrival of Julius Benedict, a talented young musician, scarcely more than fifteen years of age, whom his father, a rich Stuttgart banker, had brought to Dresden, in the hopes of persuading the great composer to receive him as a pupil. Weber was just then much cast down by the slow progress of all his efforts to establish his beloved German opera in Dresden, and was desirous of refusing the request. But Hummel's strong recommendation, and still more, the evident talent of the simple modest youth, at length decided

Weber on holding out his hand to him. Little did he then anticipate that Julius Benedict would eventually not only prove the most talented of all his pupils, but that the future celebrated composer of "The Gipsy's Warning," "The Old Man of the Mountain," and "The Lily of Killarney," would be the only one who would survive him, as the gifted treasurer of all his traditions and his school; and, at the same time, the truest friend of his family after his death.

CHAPTER VII.

"PRECIOSA" AND "DER FREISCHUTZ" IN BERLIN.

On the 15th of March, Wolff's "Preciosa," with Weber's music, made its first appearance on the stage of Berlin. The newspaper-critics took but little notice of the musical portion of the work, or at most expressed doubts with regard to the venturesome nature of certain musical innovations; but Weber had the satisfaction of learning, from many reliable sources, that the music had made a powerful impression on the general public of the Prussian capital. There is no doubt, as has been already observed, that there was a great advantage in the appearance of "Preciosa" before "Der Freischütz." In spite of the difference in the character of the two, there was certainly a sufficient family resemblance in style between the dark-haired Spanish sister and the fair German brother to prepare minds and ears for a bold and novel musical colouring, which might have appeared more startling, perhaps even shocking, had not the gipsy forest-life taken the precedence of the Wolf's-glen with all its terrors.

Early in March Weber had been consulted rela-

tive to the cast of his "Der Freischütz;" but the composer left all in the hands of Brühl, as many of the singers were unknown to him. Fräulein Eunicke, to whom the part of "Aennchen" was allotted, was rather a spoiled favourite of the Berlin public; and the little lady chose to think that she was allowed to drop off towards the end of the opera, and begged that she might have something bright and taking put in, to place her to better advantage. Brühl knew very well that the experienced capellmeister was little likely to give ear to the caprices of an artist, so he urged the addition on his own responsibility. Weber replied that interpolations were never successful, and that any addition in this case would only hamper the *dénouement*. He consented, however; consulted with Kind; and obtained from him the words of a song. Thus was produced the romance of "Einst träumte meiner seligen Base," which, although charming in parts, can scarcely be said to stand upon a par with the other portions of the opera.

The opening of the Berlin Schauspielhaus was now fixed for the end of March; and Weber was requested to hold himself in readiness for the appearance of his opera in the last days of May. Leave of absence early in that month was more easily accorded to the Dresden capellmeister, inasmuch as considerable alterations were to be made in the theatre, and all theatrical representations were to be given during these necessary reparations in the little house of the Linkesches Bad. Both Lichtenstein and the Beers fought for the pleasure of hailing Weber and his

wife, who was to accompany him, as their guests. Anxious to wipe away any impression which might have been made by his refusal of the gift of the good Beers, Weber decided in their favour.

Nothing, at the same time, could contrast more unpleasantly with the honour and respect which every body was anxious to shower upon Weber in Berlin than the continual petty annoyances to which he was still being subjected in the home of his adoption. How deeply he felt the struggle, ever going on, may be gathered from one of his letters to his old friend Dusch, about this period. "For four years," he wrote, "I have been fighting with all my power, and at the sacrifice of my health, both as man and artist, for the welfare of art in general, and of German art in particular. In some respects I have certainly succeeded; so that all my efforts have not been in vain. But Heaven knows what will happen next, under a direction so predisposed to Italian ear-tickling. Perhaps in a few months all that I have built up with so much labour may be dashed to the ground. I have done what I could; be it as God will." Before starting on his Berlin journey, however, Weber was still desirous of showing his true zeal in the service of the royal family. Brilliant court-festivities were about to take place, on the declaration of the ultimate union of the Princess Maria with the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Weber came, in outward seeming at least, to a perfect understanding with Morlacchi, that the direction of the court-concerts should fall to his own lot; and to this

understanding Herr von Könneritz fully agreed. On the very day of the concert, however, came an order from Count Einsiedel, commanding that no other than Morlacchi should be intrusted with its direction. This was but one of the many slights to which the poor German capellmeister was condemned. That it was felt, however, in high quarters was evident. A few days afterwards Weber was summoned to the palace of Prince Friedrich, the eventual reformer of the retrograde old-world ideas of Saxony, who held out his hand to the German artist, with the words, "Weber, I want no more than to see you, and press your hand before your departure." But a long conversation ensued, during which the capellmeister was led to speak of his ideas, his plans, and the treatment he received in Dresden; and the Prince and the artist went asunder with reciprocal good wishes and mutual good will. So Weber departed for Berlin, with his wife and his large dog, in a comfortable travelling-carriage, and in the very highest spirits. He felt the important step before him; he knew how his reputation trembled in the balance of fame; he was keenly aware of the risks and dangers of his score; but his joyous humour sparkled unceasingly, like a presentiment of the glory that awaited him. On the 4th of May he was received with joy and affection by the kind-hearted hospitable Beers.

The success of all great works may be almost invariably ascribed to the fortunate sympathy between the tendency of a genius and that of the spirit of the age. In this respect Weber, as the creator of "Der

Freischütz," had been peculiarly happy. Circumstances combined to stamp him as the man who had written for the spirit of his age, and was to be triumphantly accepted as its exponent—circumstances which rendered his opera the brilliant spark to light up a bonfire, and marked Berlin as the only spot where its effect could have been so immense, its success so dazzling.

The sword of Friedrich the Great had raised Prussia to the level of the larger states of Europe; but it was his flute which had been the magic wand to create artistic life among his "good Berliners." The German musical art of the age, in which Friedrich's own taste was formed, stood far below the standard of his aspirations. His father's coarse ultra-German rule had been felt too bitterly by him not to excite strong feelings of reaction in his mind; and it is no wonder that he should have turned to the polished, silken, brilliant civilisation of France and Italy for the bestowal of his admiration. But, at all events, he loved the beautiful for its own great sake; and it was this unmistakable love which first rendered art popular in Prussia. His ancestors had cultivated music at their court; but from no true sense of art. A choir had been established by Albrecht Friedrich as early as 1574; and ballet operas had been given, in which the members of the sovereign's family did not disdain to dance. But these festivities, in which brilliant costume had greater weight than musical art, although occasionally continued up to the year 1708, had no influence whatever upon the musical

cultivation of the Berlin public. With the parsimony of Friedrich Wilhelm I. vanished every trace of musical art from the royal court. Upon the accession of his son, light shone at last through the coarse murky atmosphere of Prussian civilisation. Operas were now given in the little theatre of the palace. But still, although Friedrich the Great had German musical conductors around him, he required only Italian music at their hands. The contrast between the dimensions of the stage and the works represented soon offended the King's feelings. At his orders the first opera-house was erected in Berlin; and space was commanded to be made, not only for the hitherto privileged members of the court, but for the more general public, without regard to rank, and without payment. For the first time a general public listened to the tones, of which they had heard such wondrous tales outside. For the first time they were permitted to give vent to their own free applause; and opera became thus, for the first time, a popular institution. A small theatre had been, moreover, opened by the King's direction, for the performance of the popular German farces of the day. But the good citizens who were admitted to hear "Merope," or the "Re Pastore," began to grow ashamed of their coarse farces. To satisfy them, tragedy was given in grand style. A little opera, "Der Teufel ist los," was even essayed. The best educated now sat in the purified theatre. Lessing wrote; and such men as Mendelssohn the philosopher discussed the works of Shakespeare and Molière. Operettas of a

genial kind arose like the first dawning rays of the sun of German opera. Earnest criticism of the development of the German drama sprang up in 1774. Glück, Schiller, Schlegel, shortly appeared, armed to the teeth, upon the German stage, and soon won the victory in the hearts of the German public of Berlin, over all foreign influence. So strong became this development of German art, that Friedrich Wilhelm II. saw himself compelled by public opinion to institute a "National Theatre," with a subvention of 6000 thalers. The direction of the establishment had the good fortune to fall into excellent hands. The German spirit grew proud of its nationality, as Mozart and Glück, Schiller, Goethe, Iffland, and Kotzebue were paraded on the boards of the National Theatre of Berlin. Up to the year 1795, however, there was still no special opera-troop. The greatest actors, chosen, at the same time, for their musical qualifications, alternated between the drama and the opera. But shortly after that period, Bernard Anselm Weber began to collect a specific opera-troop, which in execution soon raised the National Theatre to the level of the Italian Opera; and the King, on his side, insisted on the amalgamation of his ballet with the National Theatre—a measure which afterwards led to the union of the two operas in one. The court-opera of Friedrich the Great had already fallen miserably low. Friedrich Wilhelm II., the musical enthusiast, who did not disdain to play his violoncello in the orchestra at rehearsals, and to accept a "Bravo!" with satisfaction, gave it, however, fresh impulse.

The old custom of celebrating the King's birthday by the performance of a new opera, by one of the best composers of the day, was revived. The Italian Opera, notwithstanding, began to grow paler and paler in contrast with its more and more blooming German rival. The increasing antipathy, at the same time, to all the horrors of the French Revolution, and to the invading armies of France, still more indisposed the feelings of the public to all foreign art, and worked in favour of all that was strictly national and domestic. Thus, whilst King Friedrich Wilhelm III. was inclined, from his predilection for the ballet, to cultivate the Italian Opera, and yet, at the same time, from reasons of economy, strove to amalgamate it with the national stage, a violent reaction was taking place in the public mind against the foreign heroic opera. The events of the great wars gave the last blow to the expiring Italian Opera; and on the return of the King, in the year 1809, after the battle of Jena, it was finally absorbed, with such life as remained in it, into the National Theatre. A project, it is true, was attempted to be realised, to re-institute a court theatre; but a violent opposition on the part of the national party crushed this design at its birth. Count Carl Brühl, still young and enthusiastic, became general director of the Berlin theatre, and on Iffland's death, found the whole management of affairs in his own hands. He was a thorough gentleman, and had a genuine German heart in his bosom. He had been educated, it is true, under the patronage of Duchess Amalie of Weimar, in the taste

of the somewhat stiff heroic drama of the Weimar school; and he loved pomp and splendid decoration. But his hatred to Napoleon and France, and his antipathy to all foreign influence, rendered him, in his post of general director, the enthusiastic patron of all national art. Under such auspices it was not astonishing that the Berlin stage should have quickly assumed a supremacy, and should have been imbued with the thoroughly national spirit, which had taken such firm roots already in public feeling. The public listened, certainly, with delight to the music of Rossini and Boiledieu; but it would have been no longer possible to have given their operas otherwise than in German text.

Eager and enthusiastic as was the Count Carl von Brühl in the exercise of his functions, he might easily have overstepped his mark in his ardent impetuosity; but an unexpected dam was placed in the way of the advancing national current. As has been already narrated, Spontini had been won over to Berlin, from Paris, by King Friedrich Wilhelm, whose love of pomp and show in operatic spectacle had attached him to the composer's great heroic operas. That Spontini's genius possessed elements, which qualified him to be a powerful general on the field of art in Berlin, is unquestionable. But his unbending stiffness, his almost incredible arrogance, and his concealed, but still well-known, contempt for all German art, quickly robbed him of all the confidence and affection of the Berlin public. The very name of "the Napoleon of music," by which Spontini loved

to be called, seemed to announce an attempt at a reaction against the prevailing ideas of German nationality—a reaction which the King himself appeared to foster by his evident unwillingness to honour the composers of the stirring national music of the day, Carl Maria von Weber among the number—a reaction which the people instinctively dreaded, spite of their real attachment to the Prussian monarch. Spontini, the favourite of the court, was thus received with coldness and distrust by the public; and its heart beat all the higher in enthusiasm for its own German masters. The new capellmeister, however, not only maintained his position, but strengthened it by his adroitness and his iron will, until he held the sole sceptre of musical supremacy in Berlin. A war upon the field of art was imminent. This at last broke out, when an attempt was made, in open opposition to the feelings of the patriotic portion of the public, to revive the defunct Italian opera, by a performance of Rossini's "Tancredi" in the Italian language, on the 12th of February 1821. Parties immediately rallied on either side: on the one hand, the court, a great portion of the nobility, and the adorers of Italian art; on the other, the university, the academies, the musical societies, the opposers of all foreign invasion in art, the supporters of German ideas. At the critical moment of all this fermentation died Bernard Anselm Weber, the great supporter of the music of his fatherland; and Spontini was left to rule supreme. He was about to produce his gorgeous opera of "Olympia."

It was under these circumstances that "Der Freischütz" was destined to make its appearance on the Berlin stage; and the state of musical excitement thus gave this new apparition an importance which, without such a conjuncture, would scarcely have been accorded to any opera of any composer, even far more celebrated than Weber then was. The national party looked forward to the event with anxiety and hope: with anxiety, because Weber's previous operas had only achieved a moderate success; and such a result would have been insufficient to have fought the battle with the influence of Spontini: with hope, because Weber's compositions of the last few years had evinced so stirring a dramatic life, that his fresh attempt upon the stage might be expected to possess both fire and power sufficient to prove a mighty arm in the German cause. The allies of the court-party, at the same time, who had the most influential portion of the press under their thumb, treated this hope with scorn, and drew their ranks closer together to discharge a deadly fire at the enemy. It was always the destiny of Weber, who arrived at a time of transition in the history of art in Germany, to see his works produced under the influence of excited party-spirit. He himself felt that his new venture must either raise him to a high pinnacle, and render an enormous service to the cause of German art, or be carried to the grave with scorn and mockery. There was no middle course. It was to be a battle for life or death.

Count Brühl, whose scale in the balance had al-

ready begun to lose its weight, overpowered as it was by the favour which was heaped more and more on the scale of Spontini, felt how much depended to himself upon the success of Weber's opera. He was animated, at the same time, by his sincere friendship for the composer. All that was in his power to do he did, to forward the interests of the work. He attended to all the preparations personally, and gave every individual in the theatre concerned to know, that his satisfaction would depend upon that of the composer. On the arrival of Weber in Berlin, he found all his many dear friends and allies not only animated by the most ardent wishes for his success, but in a state of wild excitement; he found also the way already prepared for him by his friend Count Brühl. The choruses of "Der Freischütz" had been already studied, and had excited so great an enthusiasm among the singers, that their melodies were to be heard hummed about the streets. The scenery too was already in a state of forwardness, under the superintendence of the young and talented painter Gropius. Weber, who set great store by the harmony of all the accessories of his dramatic works, certainly found much to blame. The romantic spirit failed, according to his views, in the decorations; and a cold classical correctness had given the wild Bohemian forests too much of a park-like air, and the humble chamber of Agathe too much the aspect of a baronial hall. The composer was soon in lively dispute with the painter; the arrangements of the Wolf's Glen afforded subject for animated discussion. The spectral and fantastic

visions, according to the views of the decorator, were only to be faintly indicated, as shadowed forth by a convulsion of the elements; Weber insisted upon a real, palpable, and unmistakable scene of horror. "Your intentions are too delicate," he said, "for such a subject. They would be more fitting for Hamlet or Macbeth. What has my music to do with misty forms and grinning rocks? Give me my owl with flaming eyes, real fluttering bats; spare neither spectres or skeletons; and let the horrors go crescendo by every ball." The painter's idea, however, that the wild hunt should grow, as it were, out of the thickly-gathering smoke of the fire, in which the balls were cast, he approved at once. Finally, the two artists came to a thorough understanding; and Weber was accustomed afterwards to declare, that his intentions had never been so comprehended as they had been by the painters and machinists of Berlin. With the dresses, as already designed, and in part executed, he was even less pleased. All was too elegant, too spruce, too "stagy" for the wild picture of his opera. "Do away with all your embroidery, and buttons, and green tights, and dancing-shoes, and gold lace, and give me the rough wild unadorned costume of the Thirty-Years' War," he exclaimed. But here he was obliged to succumb. The refined public of Berlin would not endure such coarse dresses, he was told; and the "ballet-dancer" costumes all remained.

After one reading-rehearsal of "Der Freischütz" on the 9th of May, the work was obliged to be laid

aside for a while. The preparations for the production of Spontini's "Olympia" absorbed the time and attention of all the operatic troop far too much to allow of any rehearsals of the German opera. But Weber knew how to employ his time. He went through all their parts with the principal singers, imbuing them with the spirit of the work: they all loved him, and willingly sacrificed their scanty leisure hours in the master's service. His first care was bestowed upon the charming little soprano singer Johanna Eunicke, to whom was intrusted the part of "Aennchen." Her spirit and her grace, apart a little affectation, so charmed Weber, that he composed with pleasure and spirit, and finished on the 28th of May, the interpolated air which had been demanded of him, and to which he had so unwillingly given his assent. With all the personages engaged in the opera, fortune had dealt by him with unusual kindness. Frau Seidler, the "Agathe," handsome and graceful, possessed a voice not only sweet and sympathetic, but of unusual power and compass. Seldom was tenor voice more full of soul and passion than that of Carl Stümer, who was the "Max;" he possessed a magic charm, which was only to be equalled by the characteristic style, the noble humour, and the bold talent of Heinrich Blume, the "Caspar." Both were young, and both in the zenith of their fame. Every part moreover was well and ably filled: even the first bridesmaid was intrusted to an excellent young singer, Henriette Rheinwald, whose talent would have fitted her for a far more prominent part. Weber was

happy, and from the first easy in his mind, cheerful, and sanguine. Whilst all his friends around him were in a state of feverish anxiety, and were unable to conceal the fears with which the state of musical antagonism in Berlin, and the powerful influence of the opposing party, inspired them, he alone stood firm, and answered all their doubts with the smiling reply, "Be it as God will; but I feel that all is right."

Could any thing have shaken Weber at this juncture, it would have been the increasing nervous prostration of his beloved wife. This crisis in her husband's fate was almost too much for her to bear. The excitement of the social life in Berlin, compared with her quiet existence in Dresden, was in itself sufficient to give unusual irritation to her system; but when she felt the full force of the artistic struggle, on which her beloved husband's fame and almost life depended, her state became distressing. With a preternatural discernment, which amounted almost to divination, she felt who were her husband's friends, who his enemies; she fathomed all the conspiracies against his success; she read the very thoughts of the parties whose watchwords were now "Olympia" and "Der Freischütz;" and she trembled, spite of all assurances, when she saw the rude avoidance of Zelter, the secession of Hoffmann, who had prepared the text for Spontini's opera, and the proud, confident, triumphant manner of the Italian composer, who scarcely deigned a word or a look to his rival. She trembled; and she sickened under the weight of anxiety and doubt.

In truth, the excitement which prevailed in the Prussian capital was raised to a pitch almost incredible in modern days, when political and social questions have taken such a supremacy of interest over those of art. It was increased by the fact of the opening of the new Schauspielhaus: it was fostered by the tranquil state of the political atmosphere. Backstair rumours from capellmeister's ante-rooms, or the boudoirs of danseuses, now aroused more intense interest and curiosity than had done all the harassing events of the late wars. The enormous sums which the triumphal car of the prima donna in "Olympia" had cost—the number of trumpeters who were to blow in the great procession of "Olympia" —the deadly crushes to obtain tickets for "Olympia" —were almost the sole topics of the day. To Caroline it appeared that "Olympia" was the only name in all mouths: and she trembled more and more.

At length the pompous army, which was to crush the forces of the poor German composer, took the field in all its splendours. Spontini's opera was given in the great Opera House on the 14th of May. Two-and-forty rehearsals had prepared the work; the greatest talent of the day in opera and ballet had been employed; the most lavish expense, without stint or thought of economy, had been bestowed upon "scenery, dresses, and decorations," and the thousand-and-one accessories of unsurpassed and unknown splendours. With all this magnificence failure was impossible. Besides, had not the influential magnates of the day, in court, in society, in the press,

resolved that Spontini should triumph? It was impossible to exceed the applause which thundered down at the conclusion of each piece of music; garlands and poetical effusions were showered on the composer whenever he was called forth before the curtain. Who should say that the triumph of Spontini and his party was not complete? Who would not prophesy that Weber, with his German forces, had been already beaten from the field? Almost the entire press proclaimed the victory with its loudest trumpets. Yet the success of "Olympia" did not endure. Its merit was unquestionable; but the pressure of the screw, put on public opinion, had been too strong. It snapped suddenly and altogether. At the third representation seats were vacant, benches were empty, the shouts of acclamation had given place to a dull coldness. The German party, which had felt itself humbled and crushed, again raised its head, and breathed afresh.

Delivered at last from the all-absorbing care bestowed upon his rival's production, Weber was able, on the 21st of May, to commence the rehearsals of his opera. The choruses went admirably. The jubilee of all was immense when Weber seized a violin to lead his orchestra. There was much so new and strange in the original music of "Der Freischütz," that the artists were at first somewhat puzzled. But Weber soon overcame all doubts. His mixture of mild earnestness and good-tempered banter won every heart. The more the rehearsals proceeded, the stronger became the enthusiasm of the artists. They began to

feel the greatness and the beauty of the work on which they were employed. Weber's activity was marvellous during all this period. Alterations were made in the finale; and in the entr'acte between the second and third acts. The rehearsals often lasted several hours. And yet, in the midst of all the turmoil of this heavy work the energetic man found time to continue his great concerto in F minor, begun at Hosterwitz, to visit his friends, to frequent the theatres, to write interminable letters, to correspond with the directorship at Dresden, to hold conferences with scene-painters, costumiers, and machinists; to spend many a night with the "choice spirits" among his associates at drinking-bouts; where Dervient the actor and Hoffmann would make devilish faces for a wager over the flaming punch-bowl, until the flesh of all the spectators crept upon their bones—and yet be at seven o'clock in the morning in attendance on Count Brühl. In all, sixteen rehearsals of "Der Freischütz" were obtained, one of which was devoted entirely to the effects of the "Wolf's Glen;" and four were given with full costume, scenery, and machinery.

On the 26th of May the new Schauspielhaus was opened with a prologue written by Goethe, the poet's play of "Iphigenia," and, by the command of the King, a devoted admirer of choreographic spectacle, with a ballet invented by the Prince of Mecklenburg. Favourite dramas by Iffland, Schröder, and Kotzebue followed. By the 12th of June all was fully prepared for the production of "Der Freischütz;" but,

by desire of the King, who was anxious to show his guests, the Duke of Cumberland and the Prince of Anhalt, the gorgeous wonders of "Olympia," the first representation was postponed until the 18th of the month. Weber looked upon the delay as a good omen. The 18th was the date of the battle by Belle-Alliance; and on such an anniversary he was to battle also for his art against the invasion of the foreigner! The interval was well employed.

Meanwhile Weber and his wife had been agreeably surprised by the unexpected arrival of young Benedict, the composer's beloved pupil. They received the excellent young fellow as their own child; and Caroline was greatly relieved in mind to think that he would be always by her husband's side. With eyes sparkling with excitement, she related the position of affairs, her doubts, her fears, her nervous anxiety; adding, however, with joy, "What astonishes, and, at the same time, delights me, is to see, amidst all this, how well and happy is my husband." In truth, the calm equanimity of Weber previous to the production of "Der Freischütz," bordered on the marvellous, and astounded all his friends. No greater proof could be given of this cheerful peace of mind than in the fact, that, on the very morning of the important representation, he devoted two quiet hours at his desk to the completion of his beautiful concerto in F minor. When all was finished, he brought the still wet pages to his wife, by whose couch Benedict was sitting, sat down to the piano, and played them the whole piece with wondrous fire, ex-

plaining the story of his subject, which treated of the return of a loving knight after the Crusades to his anxious wife, step by step, to his admiring auditors. The hour was never to be forgotten by either. The words of the explanatory programme were never intended for publication; but Benedict wrote them down from memory, and showed them afterwards to the smiling master.*

The moment of the decisive conflict is at hand; but one little episodical anecdote, which has its interest for all lovers of music, must be permitted first to have its place. One day, after rehearsal, Weber was strolling with Benedict "Unter den Linden," when a bright charming boy, of about twelve years of age, sprang to greet them, with sparkling eyes and fluttering locks. "Felix Mendelssohn!" exclaimed Weber, pressing his hand warmly. The boy strolled on with them; and, when they parted, carried off Benedict to his home, and presented him to his mo-

* They ran as follows: "The lady sits in her tower. She gazes sadly into the distance. Her knight has been for years in the Holy Land. Shall she ever see him again? Battles have been fought—but no news of him who is so dear to her. In vain have been all her prayers. A fearful vision rises to her mind. Her knight is lying on the battle-field—deserted and alone—his heart's blood is ebbing fast away. Could she but be by his side! Could she but die with him! She falls exhausted and senseless. But hark! what is that distant sound? What glimmers in the sunlight from the wood? What are those forms approaching? Knights and squires with the cross of the Crusades—banners waving—acclamations of the people—and there?—it is he! She sinks into his arms. Love is triumphant. Happiness without end. The very woods and waves sing the song of love. A thousand voices proclaim its victory."

ther, with the words: "Mother, here is Benedict, Weber's pupil; he can play us something out of the new opera." And so Benedict had to sit down to the piano and sketch out all his memory would permit him of "Der Freischütz." A few days afterwards the boy played him, in return, all he had heard, and explained all the instrumental effects, with almost unfailing correctness, as if he had invented them himself.

The moment of trial was come. Four hours before the opening of the Schauspielhaus, crowds were beleaguering every entrance. To the excellent arrangements of the police, it may be thanked that, when the doors were opened, clothes alone were torn, and only a few smart bruises given in the fearful rush. The pit was immediately filled to suffocation by a compact mass of students, young men of science, artists, officials, and men who, eight years before, had borne arms against the invader—the youthful intelligence, the patriotic fire, the enlightened opposition to the foreigner. Under Caroline's box stood Benedict, the long slim figure of Heinrich Heine, sarcastically punning upon the poetry of Kind ("a child" in German), and a little broad-chested student with mighty lungs and spanking hands. Stalls and boxes were filled by members of the high society of Berlin, and the literary, musical, and scientific authorities of the day. The government officials were few: and scarcely a uniform was visible. Little by little the orchestra filled—the musicians began to tune their instruments—the hoarse murmur of the

packed crowd, sweltering in the overheated house, grew louder and louder. All at once came applause from the orchestra. Weber had entered it. And now the whole house, with its thousand upon thousand hands, took up the sound, and thundered forth its echo. Three times was Weber obliged to let fall his baton and to bow, before he could give the signal to begin. In the midst of the storm came suddenly a solemn silence. The magic musical pictures of the overture were now spread forth in all their fulness. The impression was unmistakable. When, at last, the triumphant finale had blazed forth in all its glory, such a tempest of applause broke forth, such a universal shout *da capo*, that the entire overture had to be repeated, with still greater enthusiasm if possible. The first scene, admirably grouped, and represented with life and animation, produced a great effect; but Kilian's air and the laughing chorus, although sung with great intelligence, seemed, from a want of appreciation of its musical audacity, to miss fire. Not so the passage in the following trio, "O, lass Hoffnung dich beleben," which went immediately to the hearts of all, and drew down another storm of applause. The original melodious waltz had gone by. The stage grew dark: and the excitement created by the scena of Max, "Nein, länger trag' ich nicht die Qualen," was so intense that, in spite of Stümer's artistic yet simple delivery, the beautiful "arioso," "Durch die Wälder, durch die Auen," went by without its tribute. On the appearance of Zamiel, a shudder ran through the agitated house. After the gleam

of light in "Jetzt ist wohl ihr Fensteroffen," came again the same impression on the reappearance of the demon; and the conclusion of the air was crowned with tumultuous applause. Caspar's drinking-song, conceived so differently from all the well-established forms, was evidently not understood. The curtain fell upon an anticlimax: the applause was scanty. And now animated and even tumultuous discussions arose on every side. The Spontini-ites rubbed their hands, and said with scorn, "Is this the music which is to throw the Vestale, Cortez, and Olympia into the shade? A mere melodrama! What monotony too! A whole act without a female voice." A storm of angry murmur filled the house. During the tumult once more appeared the maestro. The curtain rose. A salvo of applause greeted the pleasant forms of the two favourite singers as Agathe and Aennchen. They appeared to the eager youth of the day like forms of brightness and light after the dark scenes which had gone by. The opening duett, so magical in effect, and so new in form and treatment, and still more the air of Aennchen "Kommt ein schlanker Bursch gegangen," told admirably on the house. But the brightest gem of the first representation was unquestionably the great scena of Frau Seidler, "Wie nahte mir der Schlummer." At this point the opposition surrendered its arms. Surprised, carried away, wholly overcome, Weber's bitterest adversaries succumbed to the general and irresistible torrent of applause. Stalls, boxes, pit, and gallery, felt the summer air floating around them, prayed "leise, leise," with Agathe,

listened to the rustling of the trees, felt the approach of the expected lover, and with the maiden's joy burst forth into one great sympathetic jubilee in honour of the creator of the magic strains. It was long before the shouting could be stilled. From this moment the fate of the opera was decided. The following trio found the liveliest appreciation. The scene of the Wolf's Glen, with its wondrous instrumental effects, never before attempted, and so true to the composer's own peculiar genius, its supernatural accessories, and its romantic scenery, brought the second act triumphantly to a close. "He's a devil of a fellow—that little Weber!" cried the lusty student beneath Caroline's box, as he blew upon his burning and blistered hands; "but it is deuced hard work to do him justice." If the storm of voices growled heavily at the end of the first act, it was perfectly overpowering now. But how different was the nature of the tempest! The Italian party was struck dumb. Expressions of admiration and ravished delight were to be heard on every side. And where was the maestro? Sitting in a dark corner in his wife's box, holding her trembling hands, and kissing away her tears of joy. After the entre acte, given with life and energy by the orchestra, Agathe's prayer, and Aennchen's air, half-tender and half-bantering, were admirably received. The Bridesmaids' song, with chorus, so popular in the best sense of the word, so thoroughly German in its spirit, was stormily encored, although sung with trembling voice by its nervous executant. The Huntsman's chorus, although

greatly applauded, did not, strange to say, win its way fully with the public until about the eighth or tenth representation. Its melody was among the few, in the "Der Freischütz," that were not sung at once at every street-corner. The finale, although its rather too greatly prolonged form produced a comparative tendency to coolness in the audience, brought the opera gloriously to its close. The curtain fell: but no soul left the house. Thunders of applause and thousands of voices summoned the composer before his enraptured audience. At last he appeared, leading Madame Seidler and Fräulein Eunicke by the hand. Amidst the deafening shouting, flowers and verses were flung from all directions. The success of "Der Freischütz" had been immense—unparalleled! Critics, artists, and dilettanti appeared intoxicated; and all with one accord—for that night at least—had no words but of delight, and joy, and praise.

A small chosen party assembled after the opera to do honour to the maestro, and celebrate his victory. The Beers, Lichtensteins, Wolffs, Benedict, Rellstab, Gubitz, Hoffmann, and the operatic artists engaged in the work, were there. Impromptu verses by Gubitz were recited on the occasion. The evening was one of triumph; although Hoffmann's biting satire and mockery of the stage supernatural effects, displayed in his characteristic demonaical jibes and jeers, so affected Caroline von Weber, in her agitated state, that she felt wounded for her husband to the quick, and burst into tears.

Weber's notice of this great event of his life in his diary is comprised in a few simple words. "This evening, 'Der Freischütz' was given as the first opera in the Schauspielhaus with incredible enthusiasm. Overture and Bridesmaids' song encored; out of seventeen pieces, fourteen loudly applauded. All went excellently well. I was called for, and went forward with Seidler and Eunicke. I couldn't catch the others. Plenty of garlands of flowers. *Soli Deo gloria.*" His collaborator Kind he congratulated at once in a letter full of sympathy, kindness, and friendship; it deserved a better fate than it afterwards met with.

One poison-drop there was in the triumph-goblet drained by the composer. Among a variety of verses flung to him upon the stage was a little poem, which wounded his delicacy and gave him bitter pain. It was intended as a compliment; but it dealt him a heavy blow. In this effusion he was invited to take his stand as "Freischütz" on the artistic field of Berlin, on which, if he should bring down "no elephant," he would hit nobler game. Once more might Weber have sighed, "Heaven preserve me from my friends!" The allusion to the elephant, which had been paraded in Spontini's "Olympia," was sure to embitter fearfully against Weber the all-powerful ruler of the musical world of Berlin, whose vain heart was already filled with envy and vexation at his despised rival's triumph. All the hopes which Caroline had so fondly cherished, of seeing her husband transplanted to the more genial soil of Berlin, under more advan-

tageous circumstances, were thus crushed at once. The suffering woman was smitten to the heart by this untoward event. Weber did his best, with unusual tact and ability, to take the sting from the poisoned shaft: how little he succeeded in removing from the narrow mind of Spontini the suspicion that he himself had had a hand in the unlucky verses, subsequent events were to show. He inserted in the Berlin papers a notice, in which, after thanking all the artists concerned for their share of the success, and the public for its benevolent appreciation, he concluded with the words: "A witticism, which can but be a scratch to a celebrated man, has wounded *me* like a dagger-stab; and, indeed, compared with an elephant, my poor owls and other foolish beasts can only appear in a very sorry light." But Spontini was Weber's enemy for life; and he knew so well how to profit by the occasion, that he demanded a compensation for the insult he had endured, and received it in his appointment as "General Director of Music and the Ballet;" with the fullest powers at his command.

But, spite all annoyances and bitternesses, the subsequent performances of "Der Freischütz," with their never-flagging success, plainly proved that the national heart had been stirred to its innermost, and that a decisive victory, pregnant with as yet unappreciable results, had been won at this great battle in favour of German art. Weber had achieved, in June 1821, for the German opera, what Blücher had done,

in June 1815, for German independence. During the next six months "Der Freischütz" was given seventeen times more—an unheard-of number of representations in those days—to over-crowded houses, and with receipts amounting to 13,556 thalers. By the end of 1822, it had reached its fiftieth representation, and had brought to the treasury of the theatre the sum of 37,018 thalers. On the 26th December 1840, when "Der Freischütz" was given for the 200th time, the books of the theatre showed a receipt of 94,000 thalers arising from this one opera. Such figures speak for themselves.

The profound and genuine enthusiasm of the public was not shared, however, by the press of the day. The musical critics enounced the most contradictory opinions. Some could find no words but those of utter condemnation. Zelter, in writing to Goethe, treated the subject with derision; admitted that the music was, in some respects, "good," but ascribed the success to the "craze of women and children;" and summed up his judgment by declaring that "out of nothing the composer had created a nothing of colossal size." Tieck spoke of "Der Freischütz" as "the most unmusical row that ever roared upon a stage." Spohr, some months later, wrote: "As I never had any great opinion of Weber's talent as a composer, I wanted to hear this opera, in order to discover upon what its wonderful success is founded: but the riddle was by no means solved; and I can only explain it by the gift possessed by Weber, to

write for the general masses."* The critics admitted, it is true, the great musical importance of the work, the heart-stirring quality of its melodies, the ability with which Weber jested at all the rules of art without offending them, the originality of the instrumental effects, the breath of genius which breathed over the whole. They accepted the fact, that the opera commenced a new era in dramatic musical composition, at the same time that it placed the master in the rank of the first operatic composers of all time. They even recognised the wondrous talent with which the strange, weird, supernatural effects had been treated without overstepping the bounds of the line of beauty, the humour, the marked character, and the contrasting tenderness. But they never could quite forgive the audacious novelty, and complained that classical repose was sacrificed to effect, that the originality was often monstrous, that the characterisation bordered on caricature, that musical impossibilities were "music no more." Many ceaselessly repeated that the opera owed the greater part of its success to the devilry and fireworks. This last assertion struck Weber so forcibly, that, in a subsequent

* It is not generally known that Louis Spohr had himself the intention of taking the subject of "Der Freischütz" as the stuff for an operatic work. Georg Döring, at that time an oboe-player, and afterwards a well-known novelist, had prepared for him a libretto, founded on Apel's legend, under the title of "The Black Huntsman." The tragic termination had been here preserved; and the general arrangement was different from that of Kind. Spohr laid the work aside, as soon as he heard that Weber was far advanced in the composition of "Der Freischütz."

letter to Lichtenstein, he himself wrote: "Had not I the testimony of so many good and honourable judges, I myself might have been led to think that I owed all my success to Monsieur Zamiel."

Weber was always acutely susceptible to the attacks of the press. No doubt, the incessant opposition gave him many painful moments. But more than all was he affected by a bitter article in the *Vossiche Zeitung*, from the pen of Hoffmann. Hoffmann had been his friend; but Hoffmann, allured by the greater brilliancy of the opposing party, had fallen away from him, and gone over to the enemy. Weber might have forgiven all the witty mockery of the supernatural subject and its "childish" treatment, although barbed all the more surely by a pervading tone of good temper, and "damning with faint praise." But what rankled in the composer's mind was the indication of supposed plagiarisms from Spontini. This accusation went to his heart.

There was much, however, to raise the susceptible composer over all these little bitternesses, during the remainder of the time he spent in Berlin, after the first representation of "Der Freischütz." The enthusiasm never flagged in the theatre. People called him the "god of the day." In the houses of Prince Radziwill, Count Brühl, Frau von Varnhagen, and others, he was received with the most brilliant homage. The talented Crown Prince took every occasion to testify to the artist his admiration and respect. Strange, however, was the contrast between all this reverence and praise in the mouths of men, and the

practical evidence of their feelings towards the maestro. On the 25th of July, Weber gave a concert in the music-hall of the Schauspielhaus, and the rooms were empty! "*Molto onore, poco contante,*" wrote Weber in his diary, respecting his concert, which brought him in no more than 115 thalers.

Yet this concert was one of the most interesting which Weber had ever placed before a public. His air to "Athalia" was sung in masterly style by Madame Schultze. His own lately-finished concerto in F minor was played by himself with immense applause. The performance, at the same time, was signalised by an eccentricity on the part of that witty and clever prince of humbugs, the eminent French violinist, Alexandre Boucher, who always asserted that he had been turned out of France on account of a "malheureuse ressemblance" to the Emperor Napoleon. That such a resemblance existed was evident; and Monsieur Boucher was wont to declare that he was as great a general in the concert-room, as his great prototype upon the battle-field. On the bill of Weber's concert Boucher was set down to play variations on a national Norwegian air. But, to the astonishment of Weber—the composer of the piece—who accompanied him, he suddenly stopped playing, went through a host of tremulandos, pizzicatos, and other tricks on his instrument, imitated the trumpet-tones announcing the entrance of Zamiel, and plunged into a wild "olla podrida" on melodies from "Der Freischütz," in which he finally bewildered and lost himself entirely. Then, throwing down his violin, he sprang

upon Weber, and embraced the struggling composer before all the spectators with the words, almost choked by well-acted emotion, "Ah! grand maître! que je t'aime! que je t'admire!" The public accepted the eccentricity with favour; and a storm of applause, with cries of "Long live Weber!" ended the extraordinary scene.

On the 30th of June, Weber's stay in Berlin came to a close. The two months he had spent there had been the sunny summer-tide of his artistic life, illuminated by friendship, fame, and happiness. Such a time was never to come to him again. On the evening of the 1st of July Weber, with his beloved Caroline, was again in his little nest on the Altmarkt at Dresden, which he found transformed into a veritable garden of roses by the affection of the best and dearest of his intimate friends. But, although the news of the triumph of the Saxon capellmeister in Berlin must have long since been spread far and wide in Dresden, not the slightest notice of his return to his home, with all his well-earned laurels, was taken by his superiors, his colleagues, his theatrical subjects, or the public! But it was the old, old story! What was the prophet in his own country?

Caroline's state of health, greatly undermined by all the emotions of Berlin, now began to give serious cause for uneasiness. It was resolved that she should visit the mineral springs of Spandau, a charming little bath, lying close by the banks of the Elbe, at the entrance of one of the loveliest valleys of Saxon

Switzerland. Here Weber hired a small house, close by the spring, and looking out on the fresh green woods; and hither he accompanied his wife and a pleasant female friend. The loving couple parted with heavier hearts than might have been anticipated from the brief separation; and Weber set his face homewards by the gathering shades of night. It was nearly dark when he reached Pirna, where the great ferry-boat was to land him on the other side of the Elbe. A storm, which had been long impending, burst forth, as the boat left the shore; and the horses of Weber's carriage became frantic at the flashes of lightning and the heavy roar of the thunder. Before he could spring out, the frightened beasts had dragged the carriage almost over the edge of the boat. In another moment, "Euryanthe" and "Oberon" would, in all probability, have been buried for ever beneath the waters of the Elbe. Fortunately, by the presence of mind and rapid action of the boatmen, the horses were dragged back and secured; and Weber was saved! But so great had been the impression made upon Weber's mind by the imminence of his danger, and his providential preservation, that, before he laid himself to bed that night, he wrote his will. In this document, which is a fine example of his noble thought and strict sense of duty, he bestowed all his possessions, without reserve, on his beloved wife, and called upon his brothers and other relations, even should the will have been written without the due legal technicalities, not to attempt to disturb its dispositions, under pain of

his dying curse. As soon as possible, it was legally and formally drawn up.

Weber was now again settled in his chosen Saxon home; and sorrows and mortifications were again doomed to fall upon him with the old evil spell. One of his first steps, on his return, was to hurry to Kind, to congratulate him on their joint success. Kind was absent in Teplitz. But Weber immediately indited a letter full of attachment, joy, and gratitude, to his "highly esteemed friend and co-parent." He waited long for an answer. At last it came. What was Weber's mortification to receive a letter of irritated reproach! Kind's vanity had been wounded by the bestowal of almost all the praise upon the composition, and not the words of the successful opera. He had always looked upon the music as the mere necessary consequence of his own poetry; and he considered that Weber should have done more than he had done, to put this important fact in its due light before the public. Weber was deeply pained. But he would not allow such a reproach to lie upon him for a moment. He wrote back immediately to Kind, assuring the porcupine poet, that he felt to the utmost the debt of gratitude he owed him—that he had been universally congratulated on his good fortune in having obtained so admirable a book—that they were bound together in a joint and co-equal triumph. But all would not do. To Weber's amiable and pleasant letter there was no answer; and, in proportion as Weber's reputation grew higher, and higher still, grew the bitterness, the anger, the enmity of the sus-

ceptible Kind. Under these circumstances, as money began to flow into Weber's pocket from the performances of "Der Freischütz" on the various stages of Germany, the composer strove to heal the breach, by offering the author of the libretto a portion of his own pecuniary profits, in addition to the sum by which, on original agreement, he had become the undoubted sole possessor of the book. In a letter, full of delicacy, tact, and kindly feeling, Weber made his offer to the once friendly poet. Nothing could exceed the humility with which the favour of acceptance was requested by the kind-hearted composer. But Kind's susceptibility was not to be even thus appeased. The "gift" was indignantly refused, in a letter, in which Kind spoke bitterly of "composers who bought their libretti in the cheapest market, and then thought they had nothing more to do;" complained that every creature in the theatre, even to the lamp-man, was more considered than the poet; and concluded by begging that he might be no more disturbed about the matter. But Weber could not give up an old friendship thus, or thus receive so unmerited a rebuff. Again he wrote with tenderness and care to endeavour to put the affair into a clear and true light with him. He did not seem able to comprehend a nature, so compounded of vanity and susceptibility. Of course, it was again in vain. The rent was beyond all reparation; and thus the two men, who had worked together with so much sympathy and fire, went asunder. Both suffered by the severance. Art suffered too. Had not Kind

thus torn himself away from his collaborator, the world might have been blessed with a new opera by Weber to a far better subject than that of the dull pedantic book of Frau Helmine von Chezy.

In the midst of the distress and annoyance occasioned him by the behaviour of his old friend, Weber worked with unremitting assiduity upon his comic opera, "The Three Pintos." But his mind was soon doomed to be disturbed by other matters, important to his future weal or woe. His position in Dresden had never been otherwise than a painful one to him, as regarded his relations with the Court and the cabinet-minister. On the 14th of August he wrote to Caroline: "I cannot get rid of the idea that the King has a great dislike to me. I can give no sufficient grounds for this belief; but my inward conviction maintains it. I told Schmiedel as much: but he evidently avoided giving me any answer; and who can tell what reasons that inscrutable old secret-box may not have had for so doing? His silence almost angered me. But we shall see what they mean to do." These expressions had been called forth by an event which was not only of considerable importance to Weber himself, but to the future of musical art in Germany.

The old Elector of Hesse-Cassell, Wilhelm I., was dead. His son and successor, Wilhelm II., had resolved on undertaking a fundamental reform of the Cassell theatre, and especially of the opera, and had committed the task of this reformation to Theatre-Director Feige, with the order to obtain, *à tout prix*,

the very best capellmeister and operatic organiser to be found in Germany. Feige's choice had fallen upon Weber; and he had written to offer the Saxon capellmeister this important post, with an appointment for life, a pension, and a salary of 2500 thalers. "Just a thousand thalers more than I have here," wrote Weber to his wife. "I have passed a sleepless night; but the more I reflect upon leaving Dresden, the heavier falls the weight upon my heart. I handed over Feige's letter to Herr von Könneritz. He read it without a word. I dined with him yesterday, and drove over to Pillnitz with him: but he still held his peace; and I was too shy to speak on the matter myself. 'I cannot thrust such an offer aside as though it were nothing . . . but in truth you cannot be more attached to Dresden than I am."

As time went by, and Herr von Könneritz still kept silence, Weber requested him to return the communication from Cassell, and addressed him an official letter, in which he assured his chief of the honour he felt in his present position, and his unwillingness to quit the Saxon capital; but spoke feelingly of his duties as husband and father of a family towards those who depended on him, and begged that the matter might be laid before the sovereign, to whose wisdom, favour, and justice he desired to confide his fate. It was impossible for him, however, at the same time, not to point out how little all his zeal and honourable endeavours had been recognised in Dresden; how poorly his abilities had been tested; how completely the honours showered upon him far

and wide in Germany had been ignored at home. Alas! this was doomed to be his fate up to the hour of his death.

Könneritz was straightforward and honourable in this delicate affair. He immediately addressed a report to the King, pointing out that other Saxon capellmeisters had received far higher salaries than that enjoyed by Weber; that artistic merit was every where more and more highly remunerated in Germany; but that as a salary of 2500 thalers would be out of proportion to most of the salaries of Saxon officials, the affair might be probably met by an increase of 500. This honest report, however, fell like seed upon barren rocks before Count Einsiedel. That any Saxon royal servants should presume to consider themselves free men, and honoured by any fame beyond the boundaries of Saxony, was a horror to him. But it was still considered advisable to retain Weber in Saxony. His attachment to Dresden was well known; and it was thus decided that a minimum of concession was to be offered to him. His salary was to be advanced by an addition of 300 thalers. But, lest the poor German capellmeister should consider that he had obtained any especial distinction thereby, it was at the same time resolved that a similar addition should be offered to Morlacchi. Weber knew and felt all this; but he longed for peace and rest. He wrote to Feige to decline the post at Cassell.

But Weber, at the same time, found a noble occasion to do his duty, in what he considered the

truest interests of art, without any reference to personal prepossessions. In the month of October Louis Spohr arrived with his family in Dresden, chiefly for the purpose of securing the services of Miksch as teacher of singing for his eldest daughter. Feige had now written to Weber to entreat him, as he had declined the post at Cassell for himself, to point out the ablest man, in his opinion, who might be secured. Without one spark of envy, or one grain of prejudice, but in the full conviction of his own true judgment, Weber wrote to recommend Spohr with all the eloquence of which he was master. The negotiation was successful: and Weber had the great happiness of seeing the post bestowed, with still increased advantages, on Spohr, who, to the end of his life, filled the position with honour and repute.

Although, to all appearance, Weber had come to a decision in the matter of the Cassell appointment with an unusual degree of calm serenity, yet he felt none the less bitterly the treatment he had received at home. The cool indifference, the purposed slight, the marked depreciation, eat into his heart, and poisoned his blood. He felt, at times, as though he could bear up no longer. The symptoms of his fatal malady, which had disappeared during the happy soul-contented period of his sojourn at Berlin, again became distressing. The state of his beloved wife's health, unimproved by her treatment at Spandau, contributed considerably to the incessant irritation of his system; and, unfortunately, event came upon

event to increase still more his growing indisposition by the perpetual harass of his mind.

The thoroughly renovated theatre was shortly to be opened, and it was Weber's great desire to celebrate this event by the first representation of Mozart's "Don Juan" ever given upon the Dresden stage in the German language. He worked at this project, so dear to his heart, with ardour and zeal. Bassi, who had originally sung the part of Don Juan, under the eyes of the great master, was by his side, and aided him, with his fine memory and strong intelligence, to seize upon the intentions of the celebrated composer in the minutest detail. But this pet project was doomed to entail upon Weber fresh distress and mortification. A week before the opening of the renovated theatre, with all its rich decorations and appointments—a great and notable event in the eyes of all the Dresden public—Weber received the command to produce his "Don Juan" on the narrow stage of the Linkesches Bad, inasmuch as the theatre was to be opened by Italian Opera. The masterpiece of all operatic works was to be given, for the first time, in Dresden, in the national tongue, in a "hole-and-corner" theatre! The German capellmeister's heart nigh broke at this sad degradation. And this was not to be the end of all the sorrows and mortifications the unlucky "Don Juan" was to bring down upon his head.

One little episode came, it is true, about this period, like an oasis in the desert of annoyances. It does not appear what consideration more particularly

urged Weber to compose a little cantata for the celebration of the birthday of the aged sister of the King, Princess Maria Amalie von Zweibrücken; probably he was instigated to the task by gratitude for the valuable letters of recommendation which he had received from the worthy old lady on his journey. Nothing could be more senseless, trivial, and incoherent than the words of this cantata. All the more wonderful was it, then, that Weber should have founded on this nonsense not only the most charming melodies, but a rich flow of ideas. The finale, for a soprano solo, and quartett, he afterwards used, almost without alteration, for the striking finale of the first act of "Euryanthe." The cantata, composed in very original fashion for pianoforte and flute, was executed before the good old Princess, in the château of Pillnitz, where she resided, on the evening of the 26th September, to her extreme contentment and delight; and Weber was rewarded with a magnificent snuff-box, adorned with the initials of the royal lady in diamonds.

But other annoyances were still to come. In spite of all the cavillings and carpings of the press, the fame of "Der Freischütz" had spread rapidly over Germany and the neighbouring lands. It was given at Breslau, Prague, Carlsruhe, Pest, Copenhagen, Königsberg, and Hanover, and in almost every city, with a success which even surpassed the brilliant triumph of Berlin. In Vienna it was performed on the 3d October, to celebrate the fête-day of the Empress, and was supported by the charming Wilhelmine

Schröder, then rapidly rising into fame. But in the Austrian capital, to the great mortification of Weber, a monstrous transformation had been made to take place in the whole opera. The Emperor had forbidden the use of firearms on the stage; and so the guns, and the founding of the balls, had to be exchanged for cross-bows, and the discovery of magic bolts in the hollow of a tree. The strict Austrian censorship objected not only to the hermit, but to the appearance of his satanic majesty in the form of Zamiel. Both were cut out; and the music of Zamiel was only to be faintly heard in the "voice of an evil spirit" behind the scenes. Weber was outraged. "What is to be done with this absurd censorship?" he exclaimed in despair. He was harassed, worried, and finally obliged by his increasing illness to keep the house. He wrote to Court Counsellor von Moser, who, conjointly with Count Dietrichstein, held the direction of the Imperial Opera at Vienna, a vigorous protest against the mutilation of his work. He felt, he said, how much he had already to contend with in the struggle between the Italian and German opera, and in the spirit of opposition which always existed in Germany between north and south, without running the risk of this unlucky treatment of his music. But all expostulation, as might have been anticipated, was vain. Moser was a worthy, talented, sensible man; but in the hands of the censorship he was powerless. Weber took the affair cruelly to heart.*

* In the following year, Weber, when personally present in Vienna, was enabled, by the use of all the influence and considera-

At home in Dresden his harassed spirit was never allowed to be at rest. Every intrigue was tried, every pretext invented, every difficulty created by the adverse party, to prevent the representation of "Der Freischütz" in Dresden. After ceaseless troubles and mortifications, Weber obtained permission to give his opera early in the year 1822. But the most deadening rumours were set in circulation at once, in order to crush the opera before it came upon the boards. It was remembered and recalled to men's minds how little effect the overture had produced, when performed, as has been already related, at Fürstenau's concert. People were taught to shake their heads doubtingly respecting this music, which attempted to create a new era in the art of opera composition. Under these influences, the rehearsals awakened but little enthusiasm in the Dresden company. The enemies of the German opera rubbed their hands triumphantly.

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tion which his fame then accorded him, to obtain, although with immense difficulty, a restoration of the primary intentions of his opera, at all events in a main degree,

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCEPTION OF EURYANTHE. VIENNA IN 1822.

No doubt Weber's satisfaction at the astounding success of his "Der Freischütz" had been grievously embittered by the depreciatory tone of the press: but nothing wounded him more deeply than the frequently expressed doubts, whether his musical science was well grounded enough to compose any thing beyond what was called a musical drama. There was nothing on which Weber laid so great a store, as on his sound and unerring science. His most ardent desire, consequently, was now to compose a great opera, without spoken dialogue, in the true heroic style, in order to give the lie to these galling insinuations. As far as this object was concerned, his comic opera of "The Three Pintos," on which he was now assiduously engaged, was worthless. It seemed to him then, as a wonderful stroke of good fortune, when in November, just when his bitterness had been more especially aroused by a criticism in one of the Vienna papers, he received from Domenico Barbaja, the well-known impresario, who at

that time rented the Kärnthnerthor Theatre in Vienna, a request to compose an opera for him, for the season of 1822-23. The letter came like a ray of vivifying sun through the clouds of annoyance. The Spohr family were with him at the time. Champagne was called for; and a jovial health was drunk to the future fortunes of the new offspring of Weber's genius. His spirits were raised to a pitch of childish joyousness. A load was taken from his heart; and all again seemed, for the moment, light and life. Barbaja, it is true, requested an opera "in the style of Der Freischütz;" but a "grand opera" alone could now satisfy Weber's longings. He wrote off immediately to his friend Treitschke, the secretary of the court theatre in Vienna, as well as to Barbaja, to inquire into the more precise conditions upon which the work was to be undertaken, not only for the composer, but for the author of a libretto "so difficult to obtain." The answer from Barbaja invited Weber to come himself to Vienna, all expenses being paid by the management, in order to settle terms, and study the capabilities of the different singers.

From this moment, Weber was engaged, heart and soul, in a chase after a new opera-book. His first thought was of the "Cid," which Kind had already commenced to prepare for him; but, alas, Kind and he were severed by the imaginary grievances of the susceptible poet. A libretto on the story of "Dido," by young Rellstab, came into consideration; but the same subject had been used so often. At this juncture Weber heard Helmine von Chezy

read one of her poetical fictions in the "Liederkreis." It struck him that from this strangely impressionable woman he might obtain the game he sought. At the first hint, Helmine von Chezy was fired by the notion; she saw at once the advantage of attaching her own name to the rapidly rising fame of the successful maestro. In a few days she laid before him a variety of subjects, chiefly borrowed from the collection of "Romantic Poems of the Middle Ages," of her friend Friedrich Schlegel. Strange to say, Weber felt himself most inspired by the one, of all others, which contained, in reality, the least dramatic capabilities. This was a sketch made from a German translation of an old French romance, entitled "Histoire de Gérard de Nevers et de la belle et vertueuse Euryanthe, sa mie." Weber must have been aware of the undramatic nature of the story. But he seems to have been led away by the scattered fund of varied feelings, capable of musical expression, which it contained; and he begged the lady to prepare a dramatic scenario of this legend at once. Never, perhaps, were two more heterogeneous beings united in intellectual union, to produce a great and imposing artistic work, than Weber and the impulsive old Helmine von Chezy!

This good lady, after a variety of misadventures in Prussia, where she had been officially informed not to "interfere with affairs which did not concern her," had been settled for some years in Dresden. There she lived in very narrow circumstances, but with a considerable reputation as a "bluestocking"

poetess—a reputation which her book of "Euryanthe" was assuredly not destined to increase. Her temper had not been improved by the loss of her former beauty through the ravages of age. But she had found friends, and even devoted admirers of her talent: and in a large scantily-furnished bare apartment, overlooking the Elbe, she contrived to receive a choice literary circle, and even to entertain her friends with weak tea and bread-and-butter; although chairs may have failed for the guests to sit down upon; and beer-glasses had to supply the place of absent tea-cups. Dress and manner were all in conformity to the loose "slip-slop" life of the bluestocking, who often offended the orderly Caroline by intruding into the composer's household at the most unseemly and inconvenient times. The housewife's evident constraint on these occasions was met by indifference and superciliousness on the part of the poetess; and Weber often felt inclined to turn "the Chez," as he called, in neuter gender, this "thing in petticoats, which was neither man or woman," out of the house. "Euryanthe" was not destined, all things considered, to be born under an auspicious star.

The original story, on which Weber's new opera was to be founded, bears too strong a resemblance to the old legend, upon the basis of which Shakespeare wrote his play of "Cymbeline," to need any very detailed notice here. But it was so mixed up with episodical incidents of fire-spitting dragons, giants, tournaments, magic rings, and murders, that what-

ever dramatic element it may have contained was completely lost in a labyrinth of confusion, in which all character, logical sequence, and artistic treatment were hopelessly murdered. When it is considered how unfitted for an opera was such undramatic stuff, it becomes more and more difficult to understand how Weber could have selected, from all the romantic legends of the Middle Ages, one so little fitted for his purpose. When he did come to a consciousness of his mistake, and sought to modify its evils by constant corrections and alterations of his own, it was too late for repentance. Still he saw a wide scope for musical effects, and a rich field for pomp and splendour, and was thus induced to cajole himself, more or less, into the delusion that he had found what he had so long sought—the ideal of a great opera, comprising the grandest musical and dramatic elements, the charms of music, acting, scenery, and splendour. The necessity for this combination he inculculated on the Frau von Chezy, in her task of drawing up the detailed programme of the drama. "As for the rest," he said, "when it comes to the versification, give me strange metres, or distorted rhythms, as much as you please. That is the way to compel ideas to come." And with these instructions the old lady went to work with her usual fiery impulsiveness.

Whilst Frau von Chezy was thus engaged upon the first plan of "Euryanthe," Weber had already more than enough to occupy his time and mind. By dint of considerable exertion, he was at last enabled

to put into execution a plan, which he had long had at heart. This was the establishment of a series of subscription concerts for the performance of the best music of the day, in as perfect a manner as possible. He thus hoped to aid in the better musical cultivation of the good Dresdeners, who, properly speaking, had never yet enjoyed any such advantage. With the ready coöperation of the instrumental and vocal resources of the theatre, in which the principal Italian artists also joined, he carried out his design in a most brilliant and effective manner. The price — two thalers only for every three concerts—was moderate. The exertions of all concerned, however, reaped but little gratitude or recognition. To Weber's disappointment, this effort for the furtherance of the truest musical taste in Saxony, was but coolly received by the general public.

Much of Weber's time and thought, meanwhile, were occupied in his negotiations with Vienna. Here, at least, all, for the present, went on to his entire satisfaction. In the pompous but well-meaning impresario Barbaja, and in his friend the excellent Treitschke, he found that he was dealing with straightforward and honourable men. Weber never failed, in all his letters upon the subject of his opera at Vienna, to express how much the sympathy and friendship he received went to his heart, and how great was his confidence in the dealings of the men in whose hands his new destinies chiefly lay. All was satisfactorily arranged; the price which the composer was to receive for his opera, the author for the

book, and the expenses to be incurred in the proposed journey to Vienna. Weber felt strongly the necessity of becoming personally acquainted with the talent of the singers for whom he was to compose, and of receiving his own impressions from actual contact with the artists and public of Vienna. Upon one point alone there was a difference. The opera was desired for the beginning of July; and with this request the composer found it impossible to comply. "I am naturally more anxious than any body," he wrote to Treitschke, "to produce the very best that lies in my power. My poem is not yet ready. My official duties absorb a great portion of my time. I have an opera on hand, which is to be dedicated to our monarch. Besides, my dear wife expects her confinement in May. This period will incapacitate me altogether from work; and a *German*, who means well and truly by his art, cannot shake his music out of his sleeve. . . . If I am to have my mind wholly free for work, I can only look to the beginning of the autumn as the term of the completion of my labours. In any case, I shall be able to fix the epoch of the first representation, with tolerable correctness, about two months previously."

One of the considerations for delay here stated by Weber—the completion of his "Three Pintos," which he had intended to offer to the King—was soon swept away, and in a manner most painful to his own feelings. Before accepting the offer from Vienna, the Saxon capellmeister was necessitated, in his official position, to beg for the permission of his sovereign.

Weber presented his petition personally to Count Einsiedel; and he coupled with his request the remark, that he was desirous of postponing his work for Vienna until he had completed an opera, which he was composing for the Dresden stage, and as a homage to the King. A few days afterwards, he received a notice from the minister, that he had better abstain from any further work on the opera for the Dresden theatre, inasmuch as the representation of his "Der Freischütz" had already been conceded to him, and it was out of the question to think of giving two expensive operas by the same composer so shortly one upon the other. This result Weber never expected. Of all the mortifications which he had received from high quarters, this was one which touched his feelings as an artist most nearly. For many days he could neither eat or sleep. All the symptoms of his fatal malady increased. His cough became more frequent, and more painful; his fever scarcely ever left him; and to his poor wife's terror, bloodspitting for the first time came on. On this attack, Weber himself could but feel that it was the beginning of the end. He grew very pale, and sighed, "God's will be done!" His firm conviction that his days were numbered never left him from that moment. But the clearness and cheerfulness of his soul enabled him to struggle against this impression, however deep; and, to the last moment, his strength of mind gave him the power to support the tottering ruins of his feeble frame.

Amidst sickness and tribulations, however, We-

ber's strong sense of duty and official activity never relaxed. Morlacchi was again absent from his post. The preparation and rehearsal of all the new operas, as well for the Italian as the German stage, fell upon his already overburdened shoulders. Dalayrac's "Adolph and Clara" and "Gulistan," Boildieu's "Nouveau Seigneur du Village," and Rossini's "Donna del Lago," were among the principal operas which he studied for representation at this period. Spite his cruel mortification, he still worked assiduously on his "Three Pintos;" and found time, among other pieces, for the composition of his "Hussar Song" for four male voices, which in inspired melody is worthy to take its place along with his "Leier und Schwert."

Meanwhile, the framing of the unlucky subject of "Euryanthe" for dramatic and operatic purposes was entailing almost endless trouble, uncertainty, and perplexity upon both authoress and composer. Frau von Chezy laid before Weber her first scenario. In this crude sketch, Gerhard, the husband of Euryanthe, vaunts the beauty and virtue of his wife before the court and king of France, and is challenged, by Lysiart, his enemy, to a bet, upon which the fortunes of both depend, relative to the faith and truth of the dame. Lysiart departs for Gerhard's castle to prove the faithlessness of Euryanthe; and, thus far, the legend is carried out much as in the play of "Cymbeline" between Posthumus and Iachimo. Lysiart is received with courtesy by the virtuous Euryanthe, who is betrayed by her false friend Eglantine (without any apparent motive for such treachery), and

made to appear to have revealed to Lysiart an important family secret connected with a bloody dagger, which secret had been discovered by the treacherous lady. Euryanthe is accused before the whole court by Lysiart, is renounced by her husband (upon scarce a shadow of proof), and is led away by the enraged Gerhard amidst general execration. So ends the first act. In the second, the victim of falsehood and treachery is brought into a desert to be killed by her husband, who, instead of murdering her, fights with a lion then and there, and leaves the lady to starve. She is found by the king and courtiers, who, with as little reason for their present confidence as their previous scorn, is now believed to be innocent, and is forthwith taken care of. Gerhard returns to his castle disguised, is told by all his vassals that their quondam mistress was innocent; and, having overheard a quarrel between Lysiart, now master of the castle, and the false Eglantine, whom "that base villain" had promised to marry as her reward, but seems inclined to jilt, he becomes aware of the falsity of the accusation; and so ends act the second. The third is occupied by a tournament, during which Gerhard, as the inevitable unknown knight, defends the cause of Euryanthe, and kills the villain Lysiart, who is moreover betrayed, in his turn, by the outraged and seemingly repentant Eglantine. All ends happily for virtue and innocence.

It was impossible for Weber, with his practical dramatic experience, not to feel how weak, and how impossible for the stage, was such a programme. It

was too complicated to give free scope for musical development: the variety of the equally important personages could not but fritter away the drama; whilst the constant change of scenery entailed confusion. All the apparatus of troubadours, tournaments, and castles by moonlight, gave the whole piece the air of one of those old dramas of a by-gone period, long since fallen into contempt in the public mind. The appearance of a lion in France was simply absurd; the secret of the bloody dagger ridiculous. It was impossible to carry out the sketch in its present form; and a more clear and simple dramatic development was necessary. But the renovation of the plan was by no means an easy task. There was a fundamental error in the want of all probable proof of the faithlessness of the heroine to her husband; and any natural substitution was hard to find. There was no end to the difficulties arising in the minds both of authoress and composer. Weber, who knew his own strength in the musical treatment of the supernatural world of spirits and elves, fought hard for ghostly apparitions; he insisted also on some catastrophe which should give interest to the dénouement. Frau von Chezy was willing enough to follow out the musician's intentions as far as possible: and finally, at her request, Weber drew up a programme of his own. But matters were not much advanced by the composer's own sketch. The important secret, supposed to be revealed by Euryanthe to Lysiart, which was made to concern a pair of lovers long dead and gone, was, at the least, as uninteresting as

that of the bloody dagger; and the substitution of a poisoned ring, instead of the sanguineous instrument, did not help the matter. The lion was changed into an "Ungeheuer"—a monster of no settled description; and the interpolation of the seeming death of Euryanthe by a fall from her horse, for the purpose of giving due effect to the dénouement, was no less prosaic and uninteresting. "And then," wrote Weber, "what is to become of the treacherous pair? Shall Eglantine be murdered by Lysiart, when she betrays the plot, or he by her, or what?" In Weber's sketch there was more simplicity of treatment: but the piece had not advanced a step in interest or animation; and all was involved in confusion and doubt. Frau von Chezy protested violently against the spectral appearances of the uninteresting lovers, and most of the other innovations. Weber was obstinate in his new ideas. The lady altered, and realtered, modified and remodified; the dramatic form of the opera never gained in clearness or practical effect; and the more the composer recognised into what a slough of musical impracticability he was plunged, the more impatient he became over the task before him. He felt how much this piecemeal anatomy of his subject robbed him of all feeling for the work in its totality; and he began to grow weary to death of all these changes. At last, on the 15th December 1821, he accepted the first act of "Euryanthe" from his authoress, much in the form in which it afterwards remained; and from this day, one of the most important in Weber's career as composer,

may be dated the commencement of his labours on a work which, artistically speaking, was the greatest and most complete production of his genius—although it cost him the severest throes of labour, and entailed on him the hardest hours of his artistic life—and which was destined to pave the way for a new era in the musical art of the future. This destiny was one, however, in which, could he have foreseen it, Weber himself would have been very far from rejoicing.

But Weber at the same time had other cares upon his mind. With the turn of the year was to commence the important and anxious task of preparing his "Der Freischütz" for representation on his own Dresden stage. None felt more than himself that the powerful elements of national feeling and opposition to foreign influence, which had combated on his side at Berlin, would utterly fail him here, and that he should have to fight, on the contrary, almost single-handed, not only against active antagonism, but against the whole *vis inertiæ* of a public softly cradled in easy-going Italian music. "Der Freischütz is to be our first new opera after New Year," he wrote to Lichtenstein. "Would that the bitter cup were already drained!" Weber was all the more determined, consequently, to give his opera every possible external advantage. He never doubted a moment of leading the forces under his command, long accustomed to his conductorship, so as to overcome the difficulties of his music, and to work with him in sympathetic union: so a great portion of his care and thought was bestowed exclusively on the

scenery and machinery of the representation. This superintendence was all the more necessary, as he found little intelligence and less poetry of feeling in his painters and decorators. Every scrap of scenery, every trifle among the "properties," every effect of lighting, was examined, rehearsed, altered, and improved, under Weber's direction. On the Wolf's Glen more especially he bestowed a constant attention. It was difficult, on the confined space of the Dresden stage, to arrive at the perfection of the Berlin representation; but Weber's poetical feeling animated his artists to a result which nearly approached the romantic horrors of the scene. His eagle and his owl were ordered at Berlin, and prepared for him under the eyes of his friend Lichtenstein. But it was laborious and weary work.

With his costumes Weber, however, was more fortunate than in Berlin, where the pedantic and "stagy" elegance of his costumiers had offended his nice sense of truth. In an old royal hunting establishment at Dresden were a series of stone figures of huntsmen of the very period he required. He dragged the Dresden costumier to the old house, pointed him out the figures, and exclaimed, "Now copy me these jolly old fellows for my Freischütz people." Little figures were made in exact conformity; and the costumes in Dresden might have served as models for their truth of archæological colouring.

But all these preparations were not effected without much opposition and even detraction. Weber

had to undergo the ridicule of Tieck for his incessant trouble about such "frivolous and absurd minutiæ." Tieck was wont to say that it was beneath a man of genius and influence to display so much little-minded anxiety about scenery, decoration, and "machinery nonsense;" and Weber, who clung more and more to his principle that the dramatic stage should combine as much as possible all the excellencies of every sister art, was frequently involved in disputes with his colleague, which occasionally bore an undesirable affinity to angry quarrels.

Apart the rehearsals of scenery, machinery, and lighting, Weber contented himself with ten of his "Der Freischütz" in Dresden. At the last general rehearsal he stood up in the orchestra, and, taking off his cap, saluted the artists on the stage and the musicians around him with the words, "It will most assuredly not be the fault of any, either there above or here below, if my opera should fail." It was by such little traits of geniality as this that Weber, in spite of all his strictness, won the hearts of the whole company. Yet in the "cast" of his opera, as far as many of the singers were concerned, the composer was by no means fortunate. His Agathe was Friederike Funk, who had many excellent qualities for the part, but many defects also, the chief of which was her coldness in representation. The part of Aennchen fell naturally to Frau Julie Haase, who, although possessing only a weak voice, was admirable in execution, and spirited and pleasing as an actress. For his "Max" the composer would have longed to select

the tenor Unzelmann, an admirable actor, clever in the use of his poor weak voice; but the part was not an "acting part," and Weber wanted a fine voice, fresh from the heart, and a good singer. He was obliged, then, to give the preference to Bergmann, who as an actor fully deserved the generic name of "stick." August Mayer, the bass, had many qualities as a representative of Caspar, spite of his imperfect elocution, and a triviality in the delineation of the character, which bordered on vulgarity. The materials were not the best or the most admirable in the composer's eyes; but they had been "licked into shape" by Weber's own practical experience, his sympathetic animation, and ardent zeal. The choruses, too, went admirably under the direction of Miksch. The orchestra was Weber's own. Hopes might, after all, be entertained that Dresden would not turn its back upon an opera, the success of which, in other lands, had already been so great.

At last the important day arrived. The representation took place on the 26th of January. The crush to witness it was very far from equalling that of Berlin; but the house was full in every part. It may be incidentally narrated, as an example of the spirit which pervaded the management of the period, that Weber was obliged to pay out of his own pocket for the tickets he was anxious to present to Kind and Frau von Chezy. The performance went admirably. Loud applause, and eager cries of "Long live Weber!" followed on the overture. After the first act Weber retired amidst the triumphant shouts of the au-

dience; when suddenly appeared, behind the crowded mass of men at the entrance of the pit, an enormous laurel-bush, behung with garlands and verses, in a great tub. The intention was immediately divined; and, raised aloft, the heavy bush passed from hands to hands in majestic movement, as if borne by spirits, until it reached the orchestra, where it was let down by the conductor's seat. Shouts of acclamation greeted Weber when he returned to his post. He saw the bush, the donor of which remained unknown to him, but which the voices of the whole public seemed to offer as if it were their own spontaneous gift; and so deeply was he affected, that it was long before he could give the signal for the second act. On went the performance to the end, interrupted only by the constant applause. The Huntsman's Chorus was encored—an honour never granted before to any chorus in the Saxon capital. At the conclusion of the opera the torrent of congratulatory voices burst all bounds, and overwhelmed the house; nor could it be checked till Weber reappeared, holding his lady-executants by the hand. It was a triumphant night—a night of joy, after all the great artist's fears.

On his return home Weber found his beloved Caroline lying exhausted on her couch. Her weak state of health had prevented her being present at the representation. But a regular courier service had been organised between the theatre and Weber's house, by friends and servants; and after every scene news had been brought the anxious wife. A crowd of delighted sympathisers surrounded the agi-

tated but happy woman, as she raised herself to embrace her triumphant husband. It was a golden day in Weber's life—the climax of all his moments of pride in the success of his "Der Freischütz." "All went admirably," wrote Weber in his diary; "there was but little I could have wished otherwise. I was called out, and took on Fräulein Funk and Madame Haase. I should have liked, if I could, to have taken orchestra, choruses, and carpenters with me. They all alike deserved the honour."

Pleasant as was the incense of applause to the composer on this occasion, all the more galling to his wounded spirit was the depreciatory tone of the generality of the press. More especially was he depressed by an article in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Litteratur und Mode*, in which the expressions, "wearisome," "without melody to touch the heart," and "deficient in intelligence and fancy," were among the judgments passed upon his opera. In the state of his actual relations with the Vienna theatres the blow seemed to Weber a deadly one. From this very paper, too, he had received a request to send contributions of his own—a request with which he had declined to comply. He was, indeed, hit hard in return.

Weber's refusal to contribute to the *Wiener Zeitschrift* had arisen solely from his determination, taken some little time previously, to give up his career as a literary man, and renounce all further efforts to enlighten his age upon musical matters by his pen. The result of his articles on young Meyerbeer's

operas had shown him the danger of appearing at the same time as musical composer and critic; the jeering cry, "Do thou better!" still rang in his ears. He resolved, at any sacrifice both of inclination and remuneration, to confine himself entirely to the one best sphere of art. He had received brilliant offers to contribute to various German periodicals; and one of the most brilliant had been that of the editor of the *Wiener Zeitschrift*. The struggle had been a severe one in Weber's mind. His literary aspirations, cherished for years, had to be laid aside. But his ripened experience in the ways of the world, joined to his prudence, triumphed. The sacrifice was definitively made. But all the harder seemed the blow dealt him by one who had sought him as an ally.

The time, however, when it became necessary for Weber to undertake the journey for the purpose of studying the state of the opera, and the feeling and taste of the public at Vienna, was drawing nigh. He once more placed himself in communication with the management. Duport, a former ballet-dancer, and an acquaintance of Weber, had just then taken the place of the absent Barbaja. In the letter, in which he arranged the conditions of his journey, the composer declined the offer of a remuneration, depending on the result of his opera; but he arranged all other matters to the satisfaction of all parties. By degrees he was able to throw aside all the impediments to the execution of his design. His last days in Dresden he was to devote to his still-suffering wife alone.

Nothing could afford a better proof of Weber's kindness of heart and consideration for others, than the fact that, when just at the moment of his departure for Vienna he received a letter from Benedict the Stuttgart banker, eagerly inquiring as to the talent and progress of his son Julius, the busy man laid all his preparations aside to write to the anxious father. Weber's communication not only shows his affection for his favourite pupil, and his respect for the talents of the future celebrated composer, but is, in many ways, characteristic of the artist and the man. "My good Julius," he wrote, "gives me great pleasure; and I trust, that time, serious study, and industry, combined with his undoubted talent and his many intellectual qualities, will one day give to the world an admirable artist. Believe me, I shall do nothing by halves, to insure you a life-long joy, in return for the sacrifice you now make in parting from your son. But earnest study of art can only proceed by slow and tedious steps; by such alone can any sure foundation be laid. It is one of the saddest signs of our times, that our young men now content themselves with superficiality, run away from school, and then for ever afterwards lose themselves in vain and unsteady efforts at effect. It makes me smile sorrowfully to think that, whilst many years are considered necessary to learn the humblest trade, the study of art—the deep and all-absorbing study of a life—is looked upon as accomplished by a few months' fluttering here and there. Your son receives a lesson from me daily, instead of twelve times a

month. I do not say this to earn your thanks, but to impress upon you how much time is needed for the very simplest preliminary studies. At the same time, in order to foster his inventive powers, I have permitted him to undertake work, which, properly speaking, is premature. Fortunately I have been fully repaid by his admirable good sense. These very labours have shown him how far he is as yet from the attainment of his ends."

Weber left Dresden on the 10th February. On his departure he placed in his beloved wife's hand a sealed letter, to be opened only in case of his death. In this affecting document he laid before the partner of his life the state of all his affairs and the dispositions of his will; above all, he poured out to her all the intense passion of his constant and unwavering love. It was an admirable proof as well of Weber's regularity, order, and honourable straightforwardness, as it was of the loving-kindness of his heart. This sad duty performed, and his journey commenced, Weber none the less employed each leisure moment he could snatch from his fatigues and his duties, to send off to his wife those flying messengers of his affection, those little outpourings, so full of mingled jest and earnestness, and wit and pathos, which displayed the very heart and soul of the kindly honourable man. "I am happy to have no companion of my journey," he wrote from Teplitz; "the quiet and solitude, amidst animated nature, do me a world of good: I can concentrate my thoughts; and they are on thee."

On the 13th Weber are arrived in Prague; and

his first visit was to the theatre. He was destined there to hear, for the first time, the future great prima donna, Henriette Sonntag, who afterwards embodied, in so fascinating a manner, his "Euryanthe." On a first audition the composer was not so greatly enchanted with the charming girl. "The Sonntag," he wrote of her, "sang very nicely; but she is still but a novice, and is a little goose-ish in manner." One of the pleasures which Weber had looked forward to in Prague, was to be present as a spectator at a representation of his own "Der Freischütz." But he was so persecuted both by director and company to conduct the orchestra himself, that he was obliged to yield. The result recompensed his little sacrifice by giving him the most brilliant testimony of the respect and affection with which he was still cherished in the Bohemian capital. "It was a veritable jubilee yesterday," he wrote, "when I entered the orchestra; and I thought the shouts of applause would never have an end. Almost every piece was rapturously applauded—the Huntsman's chorus encored. I was called out by universal acclamation. The representation, on the whole, was good. Sonntag, as Agathe, pleasant; but the Aennchen—the less said of her the better."

On the evening of the 17th Weber arrived at Vienna, and, although fearfully prostrated, in his weak state of health, by three days of a fatiguing journey, immediately hurried to the Kärnthnerthor theatre, witnessed the performance, and spent a portion of the night with Duport. On the 18th he was

present at a representation of his mutilated "Der Freischütz." His pain and vexation at seeing his cherished work thus misrepresented in the great metropolis of musical art, are simply expressed in his diary by the words: "Der Freischütz! oh, good heavens!" thrice underlined. In writing to his wife on the subject he expressed more clearly the bitterness of his feelings. "Not a tempo, not a rhythm was given right. All the artistic shadings were lost. I sat in a state of fever. Yet the house was crammed full. The scenery was fine, but out of keeping—not a particle of stage-business cared for. The finale was sung all 'helter-skelter.' But I could fill a volume with my lamentations." Of all the artists concerned Weber speaks with most praise of the subsequently so celebrated Wilhelmine Schröder—"Handsome, with a magnificent voice, appropriate acting, and perfect intonation, although deficient in some respects as a singer." "I cannot comprehend myself how the opera could possibly have pleased," he added; "yet the enthusiasm for it here is boundless!" And, assuredly, it must have been balm to Weber's wounds, as artist and creator, to find that, in spite of all mutilations, all deficiencies, his success had been so extraordinary.

Whatever cause for complaint Weber might have justly had respecting the treatment of his opera, he could have none with regard to his reception in Vienna, as soon as the fact of his arrival became known. Prince Friedrich of Saxony, who happened to be present in the Austrian capital, received him

into his own circle with marked distinction. In public, as well as in private life, the most flattering testimony of admiration and regard met him, wherever he went. The press followed the general impulse. "Weber is within our walls," was the text to their laudatory notices; "every individual of note crowds around the genial composer, to make his acquaintance, and render his sojourn in this city agreeable to him." "I am received," wrote Weber himself to his wife, "as if I were a wonderful beast at a show. They make of me the idol of the day. . . . I scarce know what words to say, or what sort of face to make, in answer to all the enthusiastic eulogiums which are heaped upon my opera." "The crush of people around me is too much for me," he wrote again; "I am tossed like a ball from one hand to another. Meanwhile, it is a strange, and yet a fine feeling to know, that I have been able to give a direction to the artistic spirit of my age, which could scarcely have been expected by the prevailing taste. You can have no idea of the homage I receive. Were 'dear mamma' with me here, I should have nothing more to wish for." "Great and inspiriting as the feeling to be looked upon as a great man may be," he says in another letter, "and to see oneself the object of general enthusiasm, yet the responsibility of such a position is almost too heavy to bear. I would rather be in my still chamber with you, my beloved life. Without you all pride is shorn of its splendour; my only real joy can be in that which gives you joy too."

In all this whirlpool of incessant adulation, in which the Imperial Archdukes of Austria combined with Prince Friedrich of Saxony to do him honour, Weber never lost sight of his duties to himself as artist. He was in constant conference with Duport, who, however, would have led him into endless festivities; and business matters were sedulously attended to. As soon as the second and third acts of "Euryanthe" were received from Frau von Chezy, the new lyrical drama was submitted to the dreaded Austrian censorship. This censorship, which had been the cause, for the greater part, of the mutilation of "Der Freischütz," and had prevented the performance of "Leier und Schwert," was always the object of Weber's bitterest raillery. "I will tell you what these people do," he wrote to Frau von Chezy. "Should you go to market and buy a couple of geese, and it comes to the knowledge of the censorship, they would be sure to say, that you could not possibly want two whole geese for your small household, and that there must be something wrong in the matter. One of your geese would have to be 'cut out!'" Weber, consequently, chuckled maliciously over the prohibition of Schiller's "William Tell," which was rigidly forbidden, although the Emperor himself had said, "I don't know why people object to the piece, or what they can have against it." All this raillery was a constant source of terror to Weber's friends in Vienna; but the composer, in his genial moments, was incorrigible.

Weber had not been in Vienna since the year

1812. At that period the public of that eminently musical city had been thoroughly spoiled for every thing that was not far above the ordinary mark, by the great works which had been so lavishly set before it; and it had been accustomed to judge every fresh artistic creation by the highest possible standard. Ten years had gone by since then. The happy taste which had delectated itself with the sweet beauties of Mozart, and the genial simplicity of Haydn, had learned to soar into more fiery regions on the wings of Beethoven's genius, and had revelled and danced in the Boccaccio-gardens of Rossini. It was necessary, consequently, for the composer to study afresh the taste of the times. Castelli, the dramatic author, who bore Weber no grudge because the new opera-book was not from his own pen, opened to him all the treasures of his experience, as regarded the subsisting relations between the public and the theatrical world, the literary influences of the day, and all the secrets of the profession. Treitschke, for many years the secretary and acting-manager of the theatres, was his cicerone behind the scenes. Louis Duport, who was Barbaja's partner and present representative, the ex-dancer and rival of Vestris, now advanced in years, but still so full of restless animation, that Barbaja was wont to say, "he got through his business in a pirouette," supported and encouraged him in every possible way, and, although an exclusive admirer of Rossini, did every thing to forward his interests. Sonnleithner, the former director of the Theater an der Wien, and founder of the "Society of

Friends of Music," and Hofrath von Moser, who was one of Weber's most stanch admirers, and had already fought many a battle in his favour against the numerous cabals going forward in the theatre, moreover a man of talent as historian, poet, composer, dramatic author, and much beside, combined with other notabilities of the day to lend him a helping hand. Friends and supporters in the new trial which lay before him never for a moment failed him.

Even before commencing his studies in Vienna, Weber was well aware that he should have to deal with a very differently constituted public, and a very differently organised theatrical world, than those which in Berlin had hailed his "Der Freischütz" with such ready acclamations; and he was too sharp-sighted not to see at once, spite of the enthusiasm for his opera, that there were elements in the composition of the art-world of Vienna which must be moulded after wholly another fashion, if they were to be rendered available for the chances of another success.

The most important of these elements was to be found in the character of the people itself. Vienna was the great place of rendezvous for all the better classes of the many different nationalities forming the Austrian dominions. Compounded of such varied ingredients, the Viennese, gay, good-tempered, and fond of pleasure, living in a charming country, beneath a genial sky, and treated like children by the so-called paternal government, evinced a strong southern predilection for the merely sensuous in art; whilst at the same time they were not wanting in a

certain degree of North-German critical spirit. They were thus preëminently disposed to the cultivation of music as a common language, enjoyable by all. In the absence of all political sympathies and literary interests, they loved music for itself alone.

Another element lay in the relations subsisting between the different classes of society and the theatrical world. The true development of the drama in Vienna may be said to date from the time of Leopold I., when that monarch attempted to put down the coarse and unwholesome theatrical representations with which the Jesuits had long been wont to recreate the people, by the establishment of an artistically organised court-opera. The struggle for success between "Jack Pudding" on the one hand and "Signor Castrato" on the other became pretty nearly the same in Vienna as in other parts of Germany. Court and people were as widely sundered in their dramatic enjoyments here as in Berlin or Dresden. But Vienna possessed an especial influence, always at work in the development of musical and dramatic art, which was not to be found elsewhere—that of an independent and powerful aristocracy. In the northern states of Germany the nobility was poor, and could only derive from the court its position as a caste apart; it consequently adopted unreservedly the tastes and opinions of its dispenser of all bounties. In Austria, on the contrary, the aristocracy, that needed no such extraneous support to maintain its position, was at once the ornament and honour of the court, and the joy and pride of the people, with

whom it mixed in pleasant, good-tempered fashion. It felt, at the same time, the full force of the French proverb, "*Noblesse oblige*," and concentrated in itself most of the higher cultivation of the day. Thus, whilst the North-German nobility was of no count in the development of artistic or scientific cultivation, not a step was taken in Austria in this direction to which some noble name was not attached. The Austrian nobles appeared one day resplendent and bejewelled at court festivities, dinners and balls, to be delectated with all the charms of the Italian music and singers of the hour; then laughed, on the morrow, at the coarse wit of a local farce, side by side with Masters Tailor, Glover, or Shoemaker. Both court and people, each in its own sphere, had only looked upon the theatre as a place of mere amusement, and dramatic music as a subsidiary portion of the entertainment. But the aristocracy in Vienna, as in Prague, had been always accustomed to make the greatest sacrifices in the cause of art, and for the love of art in itself. In almost every one of its palaces was a temple, where the noblest priests ministered at the altar; and there the very same fine ladies and gentlemen, who loved to be amused without trouble at the theatre, worshipped with the most praiseworthy devotion, and made of pure music a religion. It followed, then, from the influence exercised by the aristocracy over the people, which loved it and was proud to follow its guidance, that a refined taste gradually spread far and wide; and when such men as the Palffys, the Esterhazys, and

the Coharys placed themselves at the head of the theatrical establishments, not as court-directors appointed by the court, but as independent creators, supporters, and impresarii of dramatic enterprise, the tendency, so general in Germany, to look upon the musical dramatic stage as a mere arena for court festivity, was considerably effaced in Vienna.

But if this condition of things had a powerful influence in giving so different a direction to the cultivation of the Vienna public to that elsewhere developed, a still more important one was exercised by that wonderful conjunction of circumstances which had brought together a series of the greatest masters of all times to execute their craft within the fortunate walls of Vienna. The individual influence of other artists, however great, towards the furtherance of art in other cities, had nothing in common with that of this extraordinary confluence. The great musicians of Vienna were a portion of the life, the spirit, the destiny of the richly-endowed city. And so it came that Vienna was established as the Areopagus, where musical art was alone to be judged, where artists were to stand before the judgment-seat, where laurels were to be given or withheld, where verdicts were to be delivered and reputations made; and Vienna, although blinded now and then by the dazzle of false glitter, or led astray by fashion's fancies, deserved its honours.

The court itself, however, had contributed, in no slight degree, to this state of things. When Franz and Maria Theresa, who had both little disposition

for foreign taste, themselves patronised the German drama, a notable advance was quickly made. Joseph II., who did away with the Italian opera as a separate institution, adopted every means, in his usual ardent, genial, but somewhat reckless fashion, to raise German art and artists to the level of the foreigner. He drew up plans for a theatrical school, made laws for the theatres, and established advantages for authors and musicians. He attempted also to establish a purely German opera. But in this respect another prince "by the grace of God" —the prince of music, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who came to Vienna in the year 1781, achieved far more by his cosmopolitan genius! The exclusive admirers of the Italian and German styles listened in astonishment and ecstasy to sounds which were neither German or Italian, but only—music! Mozart, for the time, ended all controversy in Vienna between the schools. Perhaps the instinctive sympathies of the court and its adherents were still in favour of the more "genteel." But the general taste of the day no longer admitted of any distinctive division.

A thoroughly decisive weight would have been thrown into the scale of genuine German music when Beethoven appeared, had there been any specific dramatic tendency in the genius of the great composer. But this was not to be. His "Fidelio," which was a failure, when it first appeared in 1805, won its way but slowly with the Vienna public, and never went to its heart. Meanwhile the coldly classical Spohr was never able to truly feel the pulse of the warm-

blooded Viennese; and Vogler's influence was in reality null. Thus it came to pass, that towards the year 1820, genuine German music began once more to pale upon the stage, before the splendour of its brilliant southern rival, and to retire to concert-rooms and churches.

A dazzling sun, which extinguished every other light, arose in the form of that child of the Graces, Rossini. He was hailed, on his first appearance in Vienna, in 1817, as the Messiah of sound. All hearts were won by his beauty, splendour, loveliness. The lovers of mere amusement rejoiced to find no strained attention required for their enjoyment of the dainty dishes placed before them. Not only the "great world," but the public in general, could but receive this musical god of love with open arms. For more than four years Rossini was the idol of all musical idolators; and Italian music again ruled supreme. But Rossini was so gluttonously devoured during this period, that the Vienna public at last sickened from mere surfeit. A change came; and once more voices were raised in the press in defence of German art.

About this period the court again grew tired of the direction of the theatres; but it was unwilling to trust the conduct of affairs, as before, to noble patrons of art; and it sought out for substantial moneyed men to farm the management. As has been already said, the Opera-house had fallen into the hands of Barbaja and Duport. The choice appeared a strange one. Barbaja, formerly a billiard-marker in the

Strada di Toledo, in Naples, was impresario of the San Carlo; but his vulgar, florid, sensual outward appearance was far from stamping him as a man of enterprise and genius; whilst his singular mixture of meanness and extravagance, of noblcheartedness and parvenu vulgarity, of generosity and harshness, seemingly unfitted him for a position so delicate and responsible. Duport had a reputation chiefly as an ex-ballet dancer. Yet both were able men. In undertaking the management of the Kärnthnerthor Theater, at a yearly rent of 140,000 florins, the two managers had taken into partnership Count Gallenberg and Count Palffy—the latter the proprietor of the Theater an der Wien, one of a family in which a passion for the stage was an irradicable mania, and a true and warm-hearted lover of art. The last undertaking of the late imperial management had been the representation of Weber's "Der Freischütz."

There is no doubt that at Vienna it was the supernatural element which had first attracted the public to this opera. It was only on frequent repetition that the nobler portions of the music were duly and worthily appreciated. But then, upon every representation, the opera, badly given as it was, caused more and yet still more enthusiasm.

Unfortunately the expectations of the friends of German music, which had been so much raised by the enormous success of Weber's opera, had received a blow by the failure of Spohr's "Zelmire und Azor," and the "Zauberspruch" of Pixis. Discontent on the part of the public at some fresh regu-

lations of the new management, such as the dismissal of favourite artists, the withdrawal of free admissions, and changes in the seats to the advantage of the upper classes, had doubtless had much to do with these failures. But indubitably German opera had again received a blow.

While such was the state of the opera at Vienna, Beethoven, however, still ruled supreme in the concert-room. Although almost wholly retired from the world, he now and then produced new works, and was still idolised above all other classical masters in such institutes as the "Concerts Spirituels" of Gebauer, in which the more refined musical public of Vienna assembled to hear the best classical music, and delectate itself in works of the finest order. These concerts were the shrine where the truest musical taste was treasured up in Vienna. Of considerable influence also in the best direction were the concerts of the "Society of Friends of Music in Austria." Nor, as far as influence upon the taste of the Viennese musical world was concerned, should the ceaseless series of concerts given, at all times, by the greatest artists of the day, be left unmentioned.

It could not escape Weber's keen powers of observation, on studying his ground, that, however unsteady, and in a measure corrupt, the taste of the Viennese public might have become in operatic dramatic music, a purer, truer, nobler feeling for art still ruled paramount in the concert-room, and he drew the conclusion that a good sound opera, composed on the principles of true art, might still achieve upon the

stage the success awarded to the masterpieces given elsewhere. It was nearly the same public which thronged the concert-room and the theatre. Could not a key to its heart be found in the latter, if only rightly sought? Could not the difficult but glorious element of classical music, in fact, be made to warm up and inspire the public here as there? It is unquestionable, that it was from this point of view, and with these principles, that Weber took his stand in the composition of "Euryanthe," spite of the fears which the very moderate success of Beethoven's "Fidelio" might have aroused in him.

But it did not lie in Weber's nature to put on the stern professor's cap in the study of his art. He collected his experiences while mixing in the bustle of life around him. Vienna, whilst he thought, studied, weighed the materials at his disposal, and formed his plans, was hurrying him along in its ceaseless whirlpool of society. He laughed to his heart's content at the drolleries of the Leopoldstadt Theatre, played in the choicest circles of the Vienna world, drank with distinguished boon-companions in public places, or formed one of the lively herd of talented men and women in Grillparzer's apartments; now honoured by the attentions of the great of the land at the house of Count Dietrichstein, now exchanging pleasant thoughts with new friends, such as Caroline Pichler, Frau von Weissenthurn, and above all, the genial Franz Schubert. In his more joyous humour he even so far overcame his feeling of bitter dislike to Salieri, as to make at last the acquaintance of the old

musician; although the two great composers met and parted coldly.

Pleasant as Weber's life in Vienna was however, flattered as he must have been by the honours showered on him, and anxious as he felt to produce a new opera in the German metropolis of the musical world, there was a moment when "Euryanthe" was nigh being buried among things dead and gone, in Vienna, even before her birth. Weber had returned from the theatre, half furious, half weeping, over his mutilated "Der Freischütz," when he received a brilliant offer from Maurice Schlesinger, the musical publisher in Paris, to undertake a composition for the French grand opera. His feelings were wounded at the moment; and the temptation was sore. But other prospects, other hopes, other influences assumed their sway; and nothing was done in the direction of the Paris opera. A temporary illness of a severe character also prostrated Weber's spirit for the time, and rendered him incapable of energy and exertion. Besides, Weber's wounded feelings, as regarded "Der Freischütz," were shortly to be somewhat healed. He had promised to conduct his opera at the request of the seductive and importunate Wilhelmine Schröder. Every step was taken on this occasion to induce the authorities of the censorship to meet the composer's views. "At all events," he was soon enabled to write to his wife, "they have given me back my devil and my rifle-balls."

Weber was still suffering from his late severe illness when the appointed benefit took place. His re-

ception in the orchestra, on the occasion of the general rehearsal, was overpowering. But the jubilee of that morning was "flat, stale, and unprofitable," as compared with the triumphant ovation which the public of Vienna had prepared for the great composer, on the night of an event, which had suddenly roused the whole population to the wildest pitch of excitement. Shouts of acclamation greeted Weber on his appearance. Called before the curtain, recalled, and called again, at the end of every act, Weber had to receive the tempestuous homage of his audience. Bouquets, crowns, verses flew at every pause in the thickest storm from all parts of the theatre. Never had composer been so honoured and adored. Weber, in his letter describing the exciting scene to his wife, could but jest at his own panting exertions to keep pace with the enthusiasm of his audience. In his diary he wrote more gravely: "It is impossible I can ever expect to witness greater enthusiasm. I have reached my climax, and I tremble for the future." To his friends he said laughingly, "It is all over with me. That young rascal Der Freischütz has been and shot his poor sister Euryanthe dead!"

But all this glitter of public homage was not gold to Weber. He sat at the banquet a sick and suffering man, and put his crown of laurel upon an aching brow. He was in this state when a letter of recall came to him from the Dresden management. Morlacchi, who had been absent in Italy for five months to recruit his health, was too much overcome by the exertion to attend to business; and the really ailing

Weber was summoned to undertake the duties of his ungrateful rival. But before departure, Weber had still to give his concert. This concert had been delayed by the kind-hearted man at the solicitation of a poor artist, who had fixed his own benefit on the same day, and felt that he must succumb in the collision. The concert at last took place on the 19th of March. Every artist had sought eagerly for the honour of assisting the celebrated composer on this occasion. Weber himself played. In a musical point of view the concert was most brilliant. The composer was again triumphantly applauded; but Weber's usual "concert star" again made its baneful influence felt. Spite of all the enthusiasm, the concert-room was far from full; the receipts were but scanty. This was the first bitter draught Vienna had as yet given Weber to drink.

For the first time Weber had begun to experience that irresistible longing for home, that "heimweh" of the most painful description, which never more ceased to torment him whenever absent from his family even for a short space, and which seemed like a presentiment of that last fatal separation, when he was doomed to die, far from all he loved, in that cold distant land. He could think of nothing but his own quiet chamber and his beloved wife. At last, after wearying days of congratulation, homage, and festivities, he had the happiness of driving from Vienna on the 21st, accompanied to the city-gates by a whole troop of sympathising friends; and after a painful journey, he lay at last in the arms of his loving wife, breathless and ex-

hausted, on the 26th. But, weary as he was, Weber had immediately to take up his oar in the galley of his official post. The removal to a new and more comfortable house absorbed all his leisure moments too; and for the time there could be no thought of any fresh creative activity. Other anxieties, though not unmixed with joy, were speedily to occupy his mind. On the 28th of April 1822, his beloved Caroline bore him a son, who, two days after, was baptised under the names of Max Maria Christian Philipp. That the name of "Max" was given in honour of the hero of "Der Freischütz," there can be no doubt; and for the future "Max" alone was the boy to be called.

The moments of a father's joy and father's blessing once gone by, a deep depression fell upon the suffering man. His new task filled him with tormenting anxieties. Morlacchi, too, who had become more indolent than ever, overwhelmed him with labours not of his own province, which went far beyond the powers of his failing strength. Fresh annoyances and fresh mortifications were ceaselessly heaped upon him also by his pitiless rival. True, a sort of reconciliation took place between the two capellmeisters, at the funeral of the young, handsome, talented tenor, Cantu, whose death was a cruel blow to Morlacchi—a truce which the Italian was sure to break. Brilliant offers from publishers, and other testimonies to his increasing fame, were showered down upon him also, to cheer his artist's heart. The spring burst out in unwonted splendour and loveliness. But the evil, alas! was now too deeply rooted in the doomed man's

body and soul. The 15th of May saw Weber again in his comfortable little cottage at Hosterwitz; but the fresh spring of life and joy was now dried up within him, and for ever.

It would almost seem that it was at times when Weber's mind and body had sunk the lowest in sorrow and in sickness, that his genius soared the highest. His "Sylvana" had been composed during his most painful hours in Stuttgart; "Kampf und Sieg" during his depressing love-sorrows at Munich; "Leier und Schwert" when under the impression of his disappointments in Berlin, his quarrels in Prague; and "Der Freischütz," his Jubilee Cantata, and his Masses, when a prey to all the mortifications and distresses of his Dresden struggle. The fresh, fairy-like, magic melodies of "Oberon" were afterwards to gush forth from a breaking heart, which longed for rest; and now, when every breath he breathed seemed a last struggle for life, some of the noblest music of his "Euryanthe" was to flow from his teeming brain.

The country air, however, of that pleasant spot upon the banks of the Elbe, was for the time of some seeming service to the ailing man. He was wont to walk slowly up and down by the river's banks, with his wife, or his favourite pupil Benedict, or some chance friend, by his side, mostly in silence: and then the revelations vouchsafed to him in these moments of pleasant quietude he would confide to his note-paper, as he sat at his open window on mild summer nights, and heard in the spirit the full or-

chestra or chorus, as though good genii had played and sung to him. And thus, piece after piece, was a great portion of "Euryanthe" conceived and sketched on paper. Passion and tenderness, pomp and sweetness, tragic power and elegiac wailings, chivalric nobleness and feminine devotion, alternated with equal freshness or force in the poetic visions, which the weak suffering man now embodied in musical form at his piano.

Although solitude was now precious to Weber, the blessing was not always in his power to attain. Among his other guests Tieck and Jean Paul Richter were constant visitors; and often was that little cottage a temple of mirth and talent and song. The latter celebrity was not sympathetic to Weber as man, however great the composer's admiration for him as an author. The fat, dirty old gentleman, with his pretensions to juvenility and female admiration, and his affectations of etherialism, was not to the simple-minded Weber's taste; and the days when he came over from his own country residence to Hosterwitz, with his inevitable wheezing snarling poodle, were not exactly the most agreeable of the composer's life. Nor was the visit of Spontini, whom Weber received, however, with marked distinction, and assisted in all his business affairs with the readiest zeal, any way more congenial. Spontini had a clever knack of mortifying and humiliating by word or action, though with seeming good will, those he did not love; and he bore his successful German rival no affection. Amongst other traits of this peculiar

talent, he took occasion to hand over to Weber two extracts from the French *Journal des Débats*, in which the composer was spoken of as an artist hitherto unknown, but now gradually rising into fame. As may be supposed, the two maestri met and parted without any feelings of warm friendship. Far more agreeable was the presence of Wilhelmine Schröder, who had come to Dresden with her illustrious mother, the "Siddons" of Germany, to give representations at the theatre. Weber, who so generally avoided all intercourse with theatrical personages, must have had a high esteem for the future illustrious artist (better known to the world as Madame Schröder Devrient) to have presented her to his wife. Often might the lively lovely girl have been seen, on those bright summer days, lying in the garden at the feet of Caroline, singing with her to her guitar, romping with the dog, teasing the ape, or bantering the "Herr Capellmeister." Well for Wilhelmine Schröder would it have been, had she listened with profounder conviction to the counsels of her experienced friend; and the scenes of subsequent years might have been spared, when she knelt at the feet of Caroline once more, imploring her advice and aid, with streaming eyes, in tortures of despair. Later, during the summer residence at Hosterwitz, came, to give animation to the family-party, the brother of Caroline, Louis Brandt, the clever actor and stage-manager of Manheim, who was "starring" with success at the Dresden theatre.

During this period "Preciosa" was to make its

first appearance on the Dresden boards. Weber, in his state of chronic weakness, found it impossible to be ever going from country to town and back, and conceived the unlucky idea that it would be better to have a carriage and horses for his own driving. Vainly did Caroline protest—vainly did friends joke at the idea of Weber as a dashing Phaëton. A handsome open carriage was procured. For a day or two all went well. At last came an upset, to prove that the composer had no talent as a coachman; and his illness was increased by the shock, as well as by the unwonted exertion of returning home on foot. Spite of this accident, however, the passion for horses and carriages remained with Weber to his death, and cost him endless annoyances and countless expense. The desire of being renowned as driving the handsomest equipages in Dresden was one of his little vanities.

"Preciosa" was given in Dresden on the 27th June; but although supported by the talent of a charming newly-engaged artist, Frau von der Klogen, and of the celebrated comedian Pauli, it was far from obtaining the applause which had greeted both drama and music in Berlin and other German cities. Much might have been owing to the scanty pains given to the scenery, which required romantic and brilliant effects. But Weber, in his state of moral depression, induced by constant suffering and fatigue in the duties of his overburdened post, could only see in this want of success a new proof how little his works were appreciated by a public,

which was influenced by the opinions of a hostile court.

By the end of September, Weber and his family were again installed in his new dwelling, now not only comfortably, but elegantly and luxuriously furnished. Money had latterly flowed in from all sides. Weber had it now in his power to receive around him, with that lavish hospitality which was one of the characteristics of his nature, a large circle of affectionate friends and distinguished guests. In their midst he endeavoured to forget his bodily sufferings; and to his pleasure and delight he could now welcome, without a care, visitors from other parts of Germany; the talented Ludwig Robert, Frau Seidler his original "Agathe" from Berlin, his amiable friend Count Brühl, and young Holbei with a portfolio of fresh songs under his arm. The latter has given to the world a brilliant sketch of an evening at Chiappone's—"one-and-thirty years ago, alas! when we all were young;" at which the lame and sickly maestro was present, but in wonderful flow of spirits: and the picture of Weber, his geniality, his simple-mindedness, his absence of all affectation, warming up into flashing animation in defence of his German school against the Italian art of his aversion, is a masterly sketch of the great composer, at this period of his life.

For the approaching marriage of Prince Johann of Saxony, a cantata by Morlacchi was to be given. But Weber also received the unwonted honour of a command to prepare the music for a festive perform-

ance. The words selected by the court, for this occasion, were by Ludwig Robert, but afforded no variety to the old-established forms of mythical and allegorical personages. Muses and Virtues mixed with warriors and happy Saxons. Weber, however, had the art of producing fire out of the coldest stone of verse. The six pieces which composed the work glowed with all his tenderness and dramatic spirit. The Prince was to go to Freiberg to meet his bride, Princess Amalie of Bavaria. At Weber's instigation, Morlacchi, and the whole Saxon choir, with himself, accompanied the Prince on this solemn occasion. The weather was unpropitious. Morlacchi again declared himself ill on his return: and poor Weber, by far the greater sufferer, had to superintend, not only the rehearsals of his own "Festspiel," but of Morlacchi's cantata also; and to take all the official business of both capellmeisters on his hands. The fatigue was again most prejudicial to him. But to all expostulations he only answered, "Let me but show them all, which is the right man and the true." The "Festspiel" was admirably given in the theatre; but it came only to vanish. Weber, however, received from the King a diamond ring, in testimony of his majesty's satisfaction; and his melodies he was able to incorporate in other works.

Fortunately for Weber, the year about to close was destined to give him many little joys to compensate him for his sufferings. His delight in his sturdy little baby-boy amounted almost to idolatry. When "Max" eat his first biscuit, cut his first

tooth, or had a swelled face, "poor innocent," the notable event was invariably recorded in his usually scanty diary. A pleasant greeting to the dying year came too from Berlin. A fête was to be given to celebrate the fiftieth performance of "Der Freischütz." Weber was intreated to be present, to receive due homage on the occasion. But he was compelled to decline "this golden dream of joy," as he expressed it. His heart, nevertheless, was full—his pride as artist gratified.

CHAPTER IX.

PRODUCTION OF "EURYANTHE" IN VIENNA.

THE further the work upon "Euryanthe" advanced, the more Weber seems to have felt how little the nature of his subject sufficed for the embodiment of the principle upon which he intended it should be based. As a child of the stage, cradled in the midst of machinery and theatrical effects, whose earliest playthings were the resin for the lightning, the thunder-machine, and the lamps, he could not but place all the attributes of stage-representation nearly on the same level of importance as the music of a lyrical drama. He felt, and he always asserted, that without the union of all the sister arts, his "Euryanthe" would be worthless. His world had naturally been the stage world: to him it was composed of music, poetry, acting, and decoration all united, as much as the globe of air, earth, water, and fire. All the elements necessary to opera were to his mind "one and indivisible." In undertaking a great opera, which was to shame those who doubted of his sound musical science, and at the same time not be inferior to "Der Freischütz" in practical effect, he was natu-

rally anxious to bring all his dramatic as well as musical forces into the field, and win his victory by their combined power. Not only was the opera to be his musical masterpiece, but to give evidence, at the same time, of his poetical spirit, his scenic tact, his stage experience, and his pictorial taste.

"Der Freischütz" represented the budding into life of his natural genius in its own dramatic sphere, after lying dormant for years, since his last semi-successful operatic work. It blossomed, as if spontaneously, during a long space of time, when his mind was free to receive every fresh impression unfettered by any particular tendency, when no feelings of the overpowering moral weight of a past success excited terrors for the future, and when physical suffering had not rendered every effort one of pain. "Der Freischütz" was a portion of his very life; "Euryanthe" was to be the result of labour and cultivation. The one was the free product of his own romantic nature, imbued with a natural spirit of nationality; the other was a compulsory submission to the ultra-romantic tendencies of a school, with all its motiveless actions, impossible characters, and absurd improbabilities. That he was able to drape the dry skeleton with robes of exquisite fancy, and give flesh and blood to old Helmine's puppets, was due to his own genius, and his own genius alone, which burst through all the fetters of the school. The weak-minded, heavy-pated hero, whose very name was changed to "Adolar" as if to increase his weakness—a creature with no attribute but muscle—was imbued by Weber's hands with

a certain degree of passion and feeling, although he never could be wholly divested of the inanity which the blue-stocking had bestowed on him. "Euryanthe," with her angelic silliness, never daring to speak out, when a word might have explained all, saved all, now timid as a fawn, now offering to rush like a lioness into the arms of death, was modelled simply on the idea of love and beauty, as a contrasting element to the wicked spirit incorporated in Eglantine, the most original and powerful figure in the confused picture. The musical embodiment of this fallen angel, looking back at the glories still shining through the gates of her lost Paradise, and yet urged on by the evil passions of envy, jealousy, and wounded pride, to dare and to achieve the worst and wickedest, was, and must ever remain, one of the greatest creations of inspired genius—a genius which shed down the light of life and truth on a chaos of ill-defined emotions. So also with the villain Lysiart. Out of the rude block Weber hewed a form of living strength—a real man, who, from the first moment of his coarse doubts of woman's virtue, to his murder of Eglantine, bore more resemblance to the rough, reckless, sensual, hacking-and-hewing knight of the middle ages, than all the gold-armoured, boastful, love-lisping heroes ever created by the romantic school. The spirit of evil, which had been embodied in Caspar and Zamiel, with all the traditional devilry of popular legend, received from Weber, in his Lysiart and Eglantine, a mortal reality, far exceeding, in grand originality, any of his other creations.

Along with these four great figures, which stand alone in Weber's work in groups, bearing, from their simplicity as well as power, all the appearance of the antique, the only element of importance, allowed to have any prominence, is that of the chorus, which, in all its varying emotions, even in the admirably-constructed and simple hunting chorus, bears a resemblance more to the chorus of the classic drama than that of modern opera. To a feeling similar to that which dictated this general tone of antique sublimity may be ascribed also the composition of his overture, by far the most important of all Weber's symphonic works, which, contrary to the great composer's general principle, rather figures forth the spirit, the feeling, and the life of the whole work, than the mere dramatic progress of the story.

Motiveless as was the introduction of the spectral element in the opera, and utterly unnecessary as it was for the dramatic development of the plot, Weber would not, in spite of the remonstrances of almost all his friends, renounce his idea. He was wont, naturally, to people his world of art with elves, gnomes, spectres, and spirits of the elements, which, as long as they occupied his mind, had as real an existence in his fancy as the ancient gods and goddesses in that of the Greeks of old. He felt, moreover, how far the creative power of the musician exceeded that of the poet in artistic forth-shadowing of the world of spirits —how little words were able to compete with the instrumental effects at the composer's command; and he could not be persuaded to give up the wondrous

power over the feelings of his hearers, which he well knew he held within his grasp, in an opera which he resolved should be his masterpiece.

Thus it was that Weber produced the work, which was not only the climax of the romantic musical period, but comprised all the beauties of the school in their highest development, whilst it avoided, as far as possible, all its many errors. Thus it was again, that Weber was once more destined to give the production of his genius to the world, not only as a rallying standard for opposing parties, but as a turning-point in the progress of art, and to stamp himself as a revolutionist rather than a reformer—a prophet, looked up to by disciples. And thus Marschner, Kreuzner, and, in some degree, Lindpaintner may be traced to "Der Freischütz;" the popular portion of Mendelssohn to "Oberon;" whilst upon the path of "Euryanthe" marched those utterly distinct and widely-sundered followers, Mayerbeer, and the high-priest of the so-called "music of the future," Wagner.

Weber's manner of creation and composition was in itself too remarkable to be overlooked. Many a time, in the autumn, might he be seen on the Brühlische Terrasse, or in the Grosser Garten, at hours when the fashionable world of Dresden was not there, with some closely-written pages in his hand, which he stood still and read, and then wandered on muttering to himself. He was learning by heart the words of "Euryanthe." He studied them until he made them a portion of himself—his own creation as it were. His favourite pupil Benedict has

done the world the service of putting down on paper, at the time, the few remarks which fell from the great master, in confidential moments, as to his own creative process. According to these notices, the genius of the composer would sometimes long lie dormant during his frequent repetition of the words; and then suddenly the idea of a whole musical piece would flash into his mind like a sudden gleam of light into the darkness. It would then remain there uneffaced, gradually crystallising itself, as it were, into a perfect shape; and not till this process was attained was it put down on paper. His first transcription of his ideas took place early in the morning, after a very frugal breakfast, as he stood at his desk. The completion and instrumentation of all the various elements of an idea were undertaken in the evening. In his first sketch he generally noted down the voices fully, and only marked here and there the harmonies, or the places where the wind-instruments were to be introduced. Sometimes he indicated by signs, known only to himself, his most wonderful and characteristic orchestral effects. These sketches, nevertheless, were so incomplete that neither Mayerbeer, with all his profound experience, or Marschner, with all his similarity of feeling, was ever able to comprehend the scattered scores of "The Three Pintos," so as to complete the work; although both the great masters had heard Weber play considerable portions of the opera. In fact, he was accustomed to play to his wife, to Benedict, and others, great fragments of any work on which he was engaged; and such fragments in-

variably possessed the form they afterwards maintained. The whole was already so firmly stereotyped upon his brain, that his instrumentation was little more than the labour of a copyist; and the notes flowed to his pen with the indications of all the shadings of expression, such as the pianos, the fortes, and the pauses, as if copperplated on the paper. From the nature of this peculiar mental process may be comprehended the enormous quantity of work which Weber was able to get through in an almost incredibly brief period. The whole transcription of the complete opera of "Euryanthe," from his sketches, occupied only sixty days of labour. Not that the composer, when once the last note was put on paper, considered all that he had written was perfection: on the contrary, he frequently bestowed the labour of many days upon alterations in his score, after first representations, or in accordance with convictions which had forced themselves upon him during rehearsals. Thus the finale of the second act of "Euryanthe" was three times remodelled; and the overture was modified by the introduction of the spectral passages, after the first rehearsals of the orchestra; and upon these corrections the same neatness was bestowed as on his wondrous "copperplate" scores.

It was in the early part of 1823, when Weber was again actively occupied upon the composition of his new opera, so often thrust into the background by other avocations, that the glaring deficiencies of his book bewildered him more than ever; and he begged

both Tieck and Carl Förster to hold a conference with him over the necessary alterations. Tieck urgently recommended a return to the simple story of the old legend, and pointed triumphantly to its success in "Cymbeline" and the "Garcia del Castañar" of Rojas. But to this proposition Weber resolutely refused to assent. He had conceived himself the new and bold idea of a "tableau vivant," to be exhibited during the performance of the overture, as explanatory of the points of the story, previous to the opening. But this notion was vehemently opposed by his friends as far too startling and hazardous. Finally the discussion, in which all parties grew obstinate and warm, degenerated into a quarrel; and the conference was abruptly dissolved. Nothing was gained by the move; and it remained the destiny of the unlucky opera to be twitched now here, now there, hacked, hewn, and altered, until the last moment of its representation.

But Weber laboured on, not without a mist of darkness and confusion around him; and one of those chances of earning favour with his royal patrons, which he had often sought so eagerly, was now looked upon as a sad interruption. His kind friend Prince Friedrich begged him to compose a cantata in honour of the birthday of the Princess Theresa his aunt; and with such a request Weber felt that it was impossible not to comply. The teeming ideas of "Euryanthe" had to be suppressed for a while, during the composition of this cantata. It was written, however, with all the great musician's usual flow of lovely melody. Of this little work nothing

remains but the vocal parts. The pianoforte score only shows a few dotted indications. Probably Weber, in his press of business, never wrote it down, and played from memory.

Whilst thus occupied, Weber was assailed by a blow to his peculiarly delicate and sensitive feelings, from an unexpected quarter. The jubilee in honour of the fiftieth performance of "Der Freischütz" in Berlin, to which he had been so flatteringly invited, had taken place: and he received from Count Brühl a letter of congratulation, in which he was at the same time offered a further remuneration of a hundred thalers! A hundred thalers to the composer, after the enormous receipts of the theatre! Weber felt himself deeply wounded. In a letter, full of tact and good feeling, he declined the proffered remuneration. "What would you say," he wrote to Count Brühl, "were you to read in the papers an article to this intent? 'The fiftieth performance of "Der Freischütz" was duly celebrated by the general direction. Such an unprecedented occurrence in the annals of the stage was doubtless entitled to this distinction, more especially as we hear that the opera, during this period, has brought 30,000 thalers to the treasury. A present of 100 thalers was given, in consequence, to the composer!'" "After all, I am only a German," he wrote again, with some bitterness; "and what have I to expect?" Weber's letter remained unanswered; and nothing more was heard of Prussian munificence.

Early in the year also another correspondence,

forming an event in Weber's life, took place. The Dresden capellmeister had been so fortunate as to secure for his own theatre—not without much trouble, annoyance, and counter-intrigue of the customary kind, however—the services of Wilhelmine Schröder, who was now quickly ripening into one of the most dramatic singers of her time. With such a prima donna he at last saw a chance of giving, with effect, the great dramatic work of the giant Beethoven, "Fidelio." This opera, which Weber often spoke of as "one of the greatest that mortal mind had ever created," he had long desired to give; and he would not have professed that reverence for all that was great in art, which was one of his distinguishing characteristics, had he not sought to obtain, by all the means in his power, every advantage that might enable him to give the most perfect effect to the music. For this purpose, Weber resolved to address the great musician himself: and a voluminous correspondence, upon the subject of "Fidelio," ensued between the two celebrated composers. It may be considered a serious loss to the artistic world that this remarkable correspondence should have hopelessly vanished, through the negligence of those who had the care of Weber's papers after his death. One little fragment of Weber's rough sketch of his first letter, in which he expresses his high admiration of the great German composer's genius, and begs his assistance in the production of his work, alone remains. Beethoven, in spite of his habitual rudeness and inaccessibility to advances, seems to have received Weber's proposi-

tion in the most friendly spirit, and to have entertained towards him the most amiable feelings. At all events, the rough old man, who was incapable of the slightest taint of hypocrisy, in a subsequent letter to Könneritz, in which he acknowledges the receipt of a remuneration of forty ducats for the performance of "Fidelio" in Dresden, speaks of Weber as "my dear friend." A subsequent personal acquaintance between the two great men added strength to this mutual feeling of friendship: and all that has been said and written respecting the antipathy and even bitter acrimony of one towards the other has been invented either by ignorance or malice.

The score of "Fidelio" was sent by Beethoven himself to Weber; and the opera was produced upon the Dresden boards, on the 29th April, after fourteen rehearsals, conducted by the capellmeister with even more than his customary zeal and care. Wilhelmine Schröder, in the principal part, although she had not yet attained the artistic maturity of the time when she was universally hailed as the one and the true representative of the heroic Leonora, surpassed all expectations, and contributed greatly to the enormous success of the opera.

After the excitement, labour, and anxiety of bringing out the "Fidelio," in a manner to do the work due honour, Weber found a relaxation, delightful to himself in more ways than one, in studying "Abu Hassan," one of his first dramatic creations, for the Dresden stage. For the charming Frau Haase, the living incarnation of Weber's heroine in

this little opera, he composed a new air to the words, "Hier liegt, welch martervolles Loos." The addition was a fortunate one. It was precisely this graceful and melodious arietta that excited the greatest admiration of the audience. The overture, with its characteristic Turkish effects, the comic duett, and the terzett, all pleased, moreover; and with the great character-actor, Pauli, in a minor part, which he had undertaken to give pleasure to Weber, this bright reminiscence of his early years flitted like a brilliant joyous butterfly across the stage.

Never, however, was Weber so much occupied, either by his personal concerns or his official duties, as to be unable to bestow thought and consideration on those around him. He took care that the interests of his excellent pupil Benedict should be advanced, by being commanded to play at court, as pianist, on the new-year's festive occasion; and the young musician was received in so flattering a manner by the court circle, that he was encouraged, under Weber's auspices, to give a concert of his own, in which some of his own compositions were produced. In mentioning the successful result of this concert to Benedict's father, Weber wrote: "Our Julius gave the greatest satisfaction, and earned deserved applause. His last rondo is capitally composed, and has established a most favourable opinion of his capabilities. . . . I tell you this with all the greater pleasure, as nobody can be so severe with regard to his productions as I am; although no one, at the same time, can take a greater pride in the development of his talent." A similar

proof of his kindly consideration for others was given, about the same period, in the care with which he produced an opera, composed by Mayer, a bass singer at the theatre. Weber could not but feel that this composition was never destined to maintain any position on the stage; and yet he conducted its rehearsals out of respect for the excellent and talented man, with as much care and energy as though it had been a master-work. And when, at the last rehearsal, which was of unusually long duration, a hungry musician muttered, "Plague take this stuff!" Weber rose, fixed his spectacles at the disgusted artist, and exclaimed in a sharp tone, "Make your mind easy, sir! As long as I am not too good to conduct this 'stuff,' you are not too good to sit and play it."

Meanwhile, in the midst of all these multifarious occupations, which pressed already far too heavily upon poor Weber's failing health, his mental creative activity never for a moment flagged. During his solitary wintry walks, from which he often returned to Caroline's comfortable tea-table half frozen and shivering from head to foot, he had conceived some of the noblest pieces of his "Euryanthe,"—the great air of Lysiart, that masterly delineation of the struggle of the passions; the wonderful duett between Adolar and Euryanthe at the beginning of the third act, which, in spite of the absurdity of the dramatic situations, is a masterpiece of vocal modulation; and the magnificent ensemble, "Trotze nicht vermessener," in which his talent was so imposingly evinced, by the agitated movement of the masses, at the same

time that all the solo voices burst forth with such dramatic clearness. The May song with chorus, in the third act, which, perhaps on account of the utter insurmountable silliness of the words, received that Watteau shepherd-like character, which bestows on it its peculiar but pleasing treatment, was conceived between these last two powerful and passionate pieces. And all this was done during the cold dull days of winter, amidst prostrating physical weakness, and irresistible feelings of deep melancholy. It was thus that, from the darkness of suffering, Weber looked forth upon the stage of fancy, and saw joy, and delight, and power, and passion, and genial landscape sweep past before his eyes.

But Weber was not permitted to revel always in these dreams of fancy, in the leisure moments which his own especial duties so scantily permitted him. Morlacchi still sat upon his over-burdened shoulders like Sinbad's Old Man of the Sea. The Italian composer had achieved a great success by his "Tebaldo ed Isolina" in Venice, and his "fine-gentlemen and lady" friends in Dresden conceived that they could not show a better homage to their love of Italian music and their favourite capellmeister, than by urging the representation of one of his compositions. His "Morte d' Abele" was fixed upon. But Morlacchi declared himself still an invalid; and it was again the suffering Weber who was compelled to produce his rival's oratorio, which, spite of all the care bestowed on it, could not escape the criticism

that "it reminded one sweetly of Rossini's liveliest opera buffa."

But this position of affairs could not last. Morlacchi was a confirmed valetudinarian. Church composer Schubert was sick to death. Polledro had been obliged to quit Dresden in consequence of a very scandalous affair, which every body seemed desirous to hush up. For ten long months all the duties of both the operas, of the royal chamber-music, and of the church performances had lain a heavy and almost unsupportable burden upon poor Weber, who had the more and more pressing work of his great opera already on his back, and who felt all too keenly, in his suffering heart, to what sad end this excess of mental and bodily exertion was fast leading him. It was not, however, without some feeling of satisfaction that Weber saw this state of things reaching to a climax, where further progress would be impossible. He had long conceived the desire to have his dear old friend Gänsbacher by his side. Amidst the many artists around him, Weber could not but feel that in all his artistic sympathies he stood isolated and alone. Often had the want of the sympathetic steel to strike the sparks of genius from his fire-flint within been an affliction to him. Could he but have Gänsbacher in Dresden, as his colleague and coadjutor, one of his fondest dreams would be realised. With such a support he might look forward to better days. In this hope Weber addressed an official communication to Herr von Könneritz, point-

ing out the necessity of the appointment of a new musical director, and recommending his friend Gänsbacher for the post. Earnestly and vigorously, with his whole heart and soul in the work, he penned the important letter, with a subjoined sketch of Gänsbacher's life, his compositions, and his claims to such a post. Weber thought his point gained, when the necessity of the new appointment was admitted. But the selection of the new musical director was delayed —ever delayed, until Weber grew sick with "hope deferred." He wrote, however, to Gänsbacher, begging him to send to Dresden some church-music of his own composition, which might be laid before the King, adding characteristic instructions full of geniality, mingled with sound common sense, as to the nature of the work most likely to please the prevailing taste of the court, and suit the talent of the singers. Gänsbacher sent two Masses, which Weber every way approved, and forwarded to his chief as "excellent Italian music." They never reached the King's eyes, however—how or why could never be discovered; although the old influences against all, which might have been agreeable to the German capellmeister, may well be suspected. Meanwhile, Morlacchi announced himself as greatly recovered, and able to resume his duties; Shubert did not leave the world, as was expected; the violin-player Rolla, of Milan, received the post vacant by the dismissal of Polledro; and the whole affair, upon which Weber's eager heart was bent, seemed again lost in the mists of doubt and uncertainty. But Weber still hoped on; until one

day came young Heinrich Marschner, who, during his visit, casually mentioned that he had as good as received the appointment to the new musical directorship. Weber respected and admired Marschner. But his heart was no less wounded and aggrieved, when he found that the negotiations with Marschner had been conducted without his knowledge, and spite his earnest intercession in favour of his friend.

Fortunately, in the midst of all these anxieties, one pleasant gleam of light came to cheer Weber's heart. Ludwig of Bavaria, the Medici of Germany, arrived on a visit to Dresden. Morlacchi had received orders to prepare an Italian opera for this royal guest, and, suddenly oblivious of all his ailments, had rehearsed Rossini's "Ricciardo e Zoraïde" for the occasion. When Ludwig heard of this, he cried impatiently: "Oh! that I can hear any where. Give me something of your young conjuror Weber. I knew the fellow long ago; and I love him." "Preciosa" was the only work of Weber's which could be suddenly cast; and so "Preciosa" was given. It was a proud evening for Weber's German heart, when the enlightened German monarch astonished, ay and somewhat scandalised, the strictly-disciplined Dresden public, by leaning from his box to address the conductor in the orchestra, clapping his hands with energy, and crying "Bravo!" like a common man.

Weber's failing health imperatively demanded an early departure to the country air of Hosterwitz. After the almost incredible exertions of his winter season, rest was still more imperative. "O Hoster-

witz! O rest! rest!" he wrote yearningly in his diary. And "rest" with Weber meant hard labour on the composition of "Euryanthe." But Weber still lingered on in the city far longer than was prudent, for the sake of enjoying the performances of the celebrated actor Esslair, the admiration of whose talent amounted almost to a passion in the enthusiastic lover of the drama. Another performance of interest also detained Weber in Dresden. Wilhelmine Schröder appeared, to the composer's great delight, as the "Agathe" of his "Der Freischütz;" and, on the same evening, her destined brother-in-law, the future celebrated actor, Emil Devrient, undertook the part of "Caspar." His voice was but an indifferent one—his cultivation meagre; and, strange to say, the acting of the man, afterwards so distinguished for his sense of the beautiful, his fine repose, and classic purity, was rough, exaggerated, and ridiculously boisterous. Weber's fine dramatic feeling, however, saw the young man's capabilities. In his diary he wrote of him: "He sang abominably badly, but may one day become a very great actor."

At last, on the 10th of May, Weber joyfully breathed once more the air of Hosterwitz. True, his avocations still summoned him incessantly to the distant city. Operas had to be studied, church-music superintended; and his desired repose was to consist in constant movement. Many a time and oft did Caroline, and Benedict who also resided at Hosterwitz, as they entered the garden-bower, where breakfast was generally spread at the early hour of

six, see the pale face of the maestro bent over his music-paper at the open window of his study. On days when his own duties, or those undertaken for Morlacchi, did not take him over to Dresden, he would work on his opera from six to eight hours without intermission. Seldom was the poor aching chest allowed repose. Occasionally, for a brief space, it is true, the tired man inhaled the balmy air by the banks of the Elbe, or in the wooded valley. Sometimes he would come from his weary work into the garden, stretch his arms and legs, and cry, "O that I were a shoemaker, and had my Sunday, and knew nothing of your C majors and C minors!"

"Euryanthe" thus proceeded with rapid steps. By the 8th August the whole opera was designed and sketched out. Composition and instrumentation were carried on together. With such persistent labour was the whole put on paper, that by the 20th of the same month, the entire score, with the exception of the overture, was completed. The development of the already-conceived ideas for this last task was commenced on the 1st September, and was ready on his desk on the 8th. The preparation of the pianoforte score of the first act had been carried on simultaneously. Never was a greater proof given of the clear perspicuity of Weber's genius, which enabled him to build up the entire edifice of his work before his pen was put to paper to note it down without correction. But now his anxious doubts and fears were to commence with greater force than ever. One consolation, however, cheered him in this harassed

state of mind. His "Preciosa" had been given in the Theater an der Wien. A herd of young would-be exquisites of the day had set their faces against the work, and had made a cabal to crush it at its birth. They had laughed and hissed even before the piece began. But the good cause had triumphed notwithstanding. The genuine public applauded lustily; and "Preciosa" had earned another great success. This gem of Weber's fancy seemed destined thus to rise upon the horizon, like a bright morning-star, to herald the advent of the great luminary which was to burst forth anon.

Weber was accustomed laughingly to assert that he was a quick sleeper and a quick rester. He certainly possessed the enviable faculty of turning every moment's rest to bodily refreshment, and every happy glimpse of nature's beauties to moral recreation. Visitors, when friends whom he loved, were smiling angels of rest to him. Among his other guests, during his country life, were now Hummel and Wolff. The latter, who suffered from his chest like Weber, would often wander slowly up and down with him, as they interchanged remarks on their mutual pathological symptoms, to the annoyance of the anxious wife. The members of the "Liederkreis" would come down, not with shepherd's crook and lute, as their designation would have required, but in their comfortable carriages, to enjoy country milk and fruit, they said, but not sorry, at the same time, to devour the excellent dinners which Caroline's culinary talents knew how to provide so exquisitely, and which Weber was

not a little proud to see dished up in his humble cottage. They laughed, they drank, they jested, and twined garlands of anacreontic roses round each others' heads; and thus was Weber's weary spirit, for the time, refreshed. He was even able to overlook, with unwonted equanimity, another slight he received in the rejection of his services during Morlacchi's illness, to place an opera, composed by the accomplished Princess Amalie, entitled "Ernesto ed Elisa," on the private stage of the court, and, after sitting as a spectator, on the occasion of its performance, to write the words, "What a fund of talent has the Princess! and what wonderful industry!"

But the time arrived for the fresh venture which was to stamp Weber's fame. On the 16th September 1823, he left Dresden in his travelling carriage, with his faithful pupil Julius Benedict by his side, and the score of "Euryanthe," now complete, with the exception of the overture, which was to be finished in Vienna. None felt more than Weber himself how important to his artistic career was the result of the step before him. It might be the great turning-point of his whole life. On his way through Prague he sold the right of representation of his yet unborn opera, in that capital, to Manager Holbein, who sent him ten ducats more than he had asked. *Rara avis in terris!* exclaimed Weber as he pursued his way to Vienna with heightened spirits.

In the afternoon of the 21st September, Weber was once more in the Austrian capital. His first feeling on placing his foot on the pavement of the

imperial city, was that he trod the ground, where he was summoned to fight a battle for life or death. He shuddered. Once more he felt that his "evil star" was shedding its blighting influence over him. No reasoning could efface from his mind this depressing conviction. That evil star, he dreamed incessantly, would first have to receive its tribute of sorrow, suffering, and anger, before the good genius would be able to stretch forth its hand and lead him on the right path of honour and happiness. It was a miserable but irresistible impression.

Certainly, as the fates willed it, no moment could have been less propitious for the production of Weber's new work, than exactly the autumn of 1823. Every thing seemed to have combined to close to him, for the time, the ear and the heart of the public. Musical parties stood in more strongly-defined antagonism, and even personal hostility, than ever. The German party, it is true, rallied around it the greatest portion of the talent, the intelligence, and the critical literature of the day, and had the historical traditions of the old masters on its side. But it had received a great blow in the failure of both Weigl's and Kreutzer's last operas, in which all the newest effects of "Der Freischütz" had been adopted, and even carried to a lamentable excess. This tasteless employment of Weber's magic spice by his imitators had cloyed the palate of the musical public of Vienna to disgust. Italian opera had nearly altogether driven its German rival from the boards of the great opera house, the Kärnthnerthor theatre. The German party

had almost renounced all hope of seeing national music on the stage, and had once more taken refuge in the concert-room, proudly draping its national robes around it, and endeavouring, as a last resource, to heap its scorn upon its adversary.

The Italian party, meanwhile, had cause to lift its head proudly. The Italian troop assembled by Barbaja, during all the earlier portion of the year 1823, under the immediate superintendence of Rossini and the conductorship of Caraffa, had been an admirable one. Such a perfect combination of singers, even in the smallest parts, had never perhaps worked together on any stage. No wonder that the Italian party raised so loud a shout of triumph. The theatre had been crammed to suffocation at every representation: and it was even asserted, that grave German musical professors, whose very hearts and souls might have been supposed to have been in marked antagonism, had been seen shrouded in dark corners of the house, and even caught in the fact of applauding with frenzy. There were even traitors and seceders in the German camp, then. The whole press had followed the victorious Italian army, blowing its loudest trumpets.

Weber hung his head. He could not but see what little impression he would be able to make with the forces placed under his command, to be marshalled in an entirely new direction, immediately after the triumphant march of that brilliant Italian company. This feeling oppressed him more than he dared avow even to himself. And many a time did his friends

shake their heads, as they heard him mutter with a deep sigh, as if involuntarily, "Well! as God may will it."

The attempt at any rivalry between the German and Italian forces was, of a truth, utterly absurd. Where could be found the singers to contend with the Fodor, then in the zenith of her talent, both as cantatrice and actress; the two admirable tenors David and Donzelli; the noble Ambrogi; and the inimitable Lablache, with all the manly vigour of his best days—inimitable alike in power of voice, musician-like taste and execution, artistic conception, and wonderful dramatic gifts? Well might Weber tremble at all thoughts of comparison. He himself arrived in Vienna in time to witness the performances of the great Italian company. "I heard the 'Matrimonio Segreto,'" he wrote to Caroline. "Oh, my beloved mousy! such a pair of artists as Fodor and Lablache have never come before me. It was perfection—the highest, purest, grandest, most delighting that nature could bestow or art create for the delectation of the musician. Oh! could but the Fodor sing my "Euryanthe!" People would go mad, I think—I should." "Last night," he wrote again, "I heard the 'Semiramide.' In song and acting every thing was admirable; the Fodor and Lablache inimitable. Such Italian opera could not but excite enthusiasm. I grow more angry with my Germans than with these Italians." Indeed, spite of his own strong prepossessions, Weber himself succumbed to the Italian witchery of these great artists; and he "eat out his own heart"

at the thought of the far minor advantages placed at his own disposal. One night, at the performance of "Cenerentola," he sat long brooding, full of an admiration which smote him painfully. After the well-known duett between "Dandini" and "Magnifico," given by Ambrogi and Lablache, he rose without a word to the friends around him, and left his box. On being asked the next morning why he had disappeared so suddenly, he unwillingly replied, "When it comes to such a pass that these confounded Italian artists please even me with their trumpery stuff, the devil must be in it! There was no standing it any longer." Then Weber laughed at his own comical wrath: he laughed, but he still suffered inwardly.

Weber, at the same time, could not conceal from himself that his position was rendered still more difficult by the fact of the long residence of Rossini in the Austrian capital. In truth, the personal contrast between the two great composers was remarkable, and by no means to the advantage of Weber. On the one hand was the German, small, insignificant, and weakly, challenging observation only by the magic of his liveliness and wit, important only by his strength of mind, without wealth, without power, and accustomed, from his earliest youth, to fight the hard battle of life. On the other, stood proudly the magnificent Italian, with his fine form, born to be the friend of princes; in his early years the spoiled cherubim of enamoured countesses; the husband of a beautiful singer, who had ruled monarchs by her witcheries;

the winner of the grand prize in life's lottery; accustomed to see fortune, love, and honour dance round him as his humble slaves; laughing with a life which smiled upon him in return. With such a rival how was Weber to contend? Like his Adolar, he trusted to "God and his Euryanthe," and resolved to do battle with a true and reliant heart. He was too experienced an adept, however, in all the arts of theatrical diplomacy, not to look around and see upon what allies he was able to count in the coming struggle—what adversaries might be won over. A great portion of the intelligence, taste, cultivation, and true artistic feeling was already on his side. In the musical emporium of Steiner-Haslinger, where the influential musical critics of the time were wont to stroll in, to look at the newest scores, chat upon the musical topics of the day, and give their opinion with unscrupulous swagger, Weber found also more confederates than he had expected. He was aware that he could rely upon the lower classes, who hated the Italian opera, and looked askance and sulkily on its supporters among the court, the noble officials, and the garrison; but he was unwilling to take any direct steps to court their favour. Circumstances led him in a direction, which he followed almost against his own will, but which was to lead him into the very midst of a camp, where he was to find confederate powers who ranged themselves wholly on his side.

A strange society had been for some years established in Vienna. It consisted of almost all the literary, scientific, and artistic "men of mark" of the

day, and was accustomed to meet at the "Blumenstöckel," a small inn in an obscure street of the capital. This society had gradually acquired a great European reputation, under the name of the "Ludlam's Höhle," although its drift and avowed tendency were only to encourage "the art of divine nonsense." Harmless as it was, it was destined eventually to meet its death by the hands of the police. But in these days it flourished, and carried its avowed art to the sublimest pitch of perfection. A naked Bacchus bestrode the pothouse door; a narrow winding stair led down into a sort of cellar-room, where the profane were allowed to eat and drink in their own low way: but through this public room was another long, low, dark, smoky chamber, which was the holy sanctuary of the illustrious "Ludlam's Höhle." As the society increased in numbers, the further wall had been broken down, and the narrow space enlarged. And in clouds of the densest tobacco-smoke, at bare deal tables, on bare deal benches, was wont to sit all the art, science, wit, and learning of Vienna. The Ludlamites called themselves "bodies;" all other mortals were mere "shadows;" and a neophyte was obliged, on being admitted into the sanctuary, to lay aside his "shadow" name, and take a "bodily" designation. It chief, or "Caliph" as he was called, was the actor Schwartz, who sat on an elevated seat, as on a throne, with his round red stolid face. All the leading men of the day took fancy names of the wildest and strangest description, but all bearing some analogy, however remote, to their standing, character, temper,

or past life.* Although nonsense, and in modern parlance "chaff," were avowedly the objects of the society, it followed naturally from such an assemblage of eminent men, that, in the midst of the production of comic music, drawings, caricatures, and equivocal wit, it was impossible that art, and science, and literature should not be discussed. In its influence in this respect, the "Ludlam's Höhle" was looked up to as a mighty engine of power; although never was this power known to have been misused. It was into this awful and semi-mysterious society that it was determined Weber should be inducted.

Weber was led into the crowded, tobacco-smoke-reeking assemblage by the caliph himself, accompanied by Benedict and Holtei, amidst the usual grand chorus of honour, the only words of which were "dumm! dumm! dumm!" A member rose to move that the neophyte should be admitted without the customary free-masonic trials; and the motion was accepted by the usual response of "Eins! zwei! drei!" After a pause of thoughtful silence, Weber was hailed under his new Ludlamite name of "Aga-

* One of the reasons alleged for the dissolution of this society by the Austrian police, was that it was accustomed to sing a famous chorus to the words, "Black is red—red is black." These words in reality only alluded to the red face of Schwartz (Black) the caliph, but were looked upon by the suspicious authorities as referring to prohibited political colours. It was a rule of the society moreover, that the stupidest of the members should be the chief of the community, and the next in rank of dunder-headedness to be the vice-president. This regulation was naturally looked upon also as an implied satire upon Imperial Majesty and his prime minister.

thus the bull's-eye-hitter," the "Agathus" being an allusion to the heroine of his opera, the adjunct to the fact of his having hit the mark by his "Der Freischütz." Upon Benedict was bestowed the designation of "Maledünntus," as the reverse of the syllables forming his name, with the addition of "Wagner der Weberjunge" (Weaver's apprentice); the first name in honour of his being the famulus of the great Faust of music. All that wit and jest and song and extravagance could invent, was lavished with spendthrift hand in honour of the occasion. But poor Weber, whose weak chest was affected by the dense tobacco-smoke, and whose delicate nerves were shattered by the noise, was more shocked and repelled by the new honours awarded him, than pleased with his reception. "It must have been the devil that thrust me into that wasps' nest," he said, on returning home, to Holtei. "Were it not for the necessity of keeping well with the critics who wallow in such filth, Satan himself could never drag me there again." But after a time Weber began to change his note. "They are certainly very jolly fellows," he said. After having been dragged to the "Höhle" a few times, and getting accustomed to the manner in which "the divine art of nonsense" was cultivated, he used to look forward to a Ludlamite evening as one of the greatest joys of his Vienna life. The magic spell had worked its due effect. Not only was Weber's spirit roused and animated by his intercourse with his new associates, but they in turn formed a band of the stanchest friends, to rally round

him and support him during the troublous times of the production of his "Euryanthe." Spite his many hours of deep depression and harrowing anxiety, Weber was enabled, consequently, to enjoy his country excursions and pleasant pothouse fare with Holkei, his hearty laugh at the farces of the Leopoldstadt theatre, and his joyous evenings, now here, now there.

The hours of depression and anxiety, it is true, were many and hard to bear. Although Weber wrote to his dear wife, entreating her not to believe all the unfavourable accounts abroad, with the assurance, "I myself am in the best spirits;" yet these words were sadly belied by the reality. He occupied himself in every way; went through their parts with the singers; finished, in scattered moments of leisure, his overture: but the dark cloud, spite all, would rest upon his soul only too often. It once more—as it never ceased to do from henceforth throughout his life, during his absences from home—assumed the form of that wearing, gnawing, oppressive heimweh, in which yearning visions of his beloved wife and darling little boy haunted him incessantly.

Fortunately Weber had not to deal with that usual curse of authors and composers in the theatrical world—the "indisposition" of actors and actresses. All the artists engaged seemed to be animated by the greatest goodwill and zeal in favour of the opera. Heitzinger and Forti, the Adolar and Lysiart, were full of ardour in the cause. With Madame Grünbaum, Weber's old friend, alone had the composer any of the inevitable theatrical difficul-

ties. This lady, to whom the part of Eglantine had been cast, was very jealous of her rights as "prima donna." It was useless pointing out to her that the musical and dramatic qualities of "Eglantine" were as great as those of "Euryanthe," or even greater; she still grumbled, and even insisted upon the title being changed, lest people should imagine she had been thrust into "second parts." A threat of taking the part away and giving it to another singer, seems at last, however, to have quieted the grumblings of the recalcitrant lady.

And who was to be the Euryanthe? But a short time before, Weber would have declared that Charlotte Ungher—and "the Ungher" alone—could have been thought of for the representation of his heroine. But since then a little star had risen upon the operatic horizon of Vienna, and had gradually shone with greater and greater fulgence, until the public had been not a little dazzled. This star was Henriette Sonntag. Weber, as already related, had seen her the previous year in Prague, admired her charming voice, and her "angel-pretty" face, but considered her a little "goose-ish." Since then, however, she had advanced in her profession with rapid strides. A series of representations at Vienna had won all hearts; and, on the departure of Wilhelmine Schröder to Dresden, Count Palffy and Barbaja had resolved to win over to the Vienna stage the little Sonntag. With all her charm of pretty innocence and her sweet voice, she had made her appearance, and had contrived to let her own light twinkle brightly even

by the side of Fodor and Colbran-Rossini. Still she might have been considered a pet, rather than an admired favourite. The public of Vienna loved to see and hear her—that was all! Her beauty caused her to be sought by all the enterprising young Don Juans of Vienna, among whom the singer Forti was one of the most ardent: but her innocence, which amounted to a naïveté, of which several laughable anecdotes ran the round of Vienna chit-chat, protected her from these assailants. She was petted more and more by the delighted Viennese.

Still people could scarcely comprehend how Weber could have selected for the important part of "Euryanthe" an artist who was "a mere pet." Of course envious tongues declared that he was deeply in love with her. But Weber, spite his constitutional admiration of female beauty, had now no heart but that which he had left at home. He knew, moreover, that the step upon which he had resolved was in the right direction. He heard "the Sonntag" when she made the hazardous attempt of singing the heroine of Rossini's "Donna del Lago" in Italian; and he was more and more determined in his decision. "She is a little cold in acting," he wrote of her; "but her execution is exquisite." He took the score of "Euryanthe" to the "pretty little creature." She ran through it with so much feeling and fire, related Weber afterwards, that her mother was moved to tears, and he himself was "donkey enough" to be deeply affected.

Meanwhile, a remark made by the old giant Beethoven respecting Weber's new work, in Steiner's es-

tablishment, and brought to the composer's ears by Benedict, made him resolve no further to postpone the visit, which he had longed to make to the mighty master, but from which he had been constantly kept back by the rumours always rife respecting Beethoven's rude and uncouth manners to his visitors. Weber was encouraged, at the same time, by the friendly tone of the letters which he had received from the great composer of "Fidelio," on the subject of the production of his opera in Dresden. He took courage; and, after having been duly announced, he drove out, on the 5th October, along with Benedict and Haslinger the publisher, to Baden (by Vienna), where the old lion was wont, until late in the autumn, to have his den.

Weber's fears as to his reception had been, in a great measure, groundless. Beethoven was no longer the growling ogre, which so many had described in years gone by. By nature and education he was reserved, morose, and irritable. The death of the girl he loved in early years had rendered him misanthropical; and his ascetic devotion to his art had naturally made him averse to mixing with the world. His life had been one of a martyr of the old legends, or an iron-bound hero of the antique. Even when sitting as a disciple at the feet of Father Haydn he had vowed himself to eternal celibacy, in order that no joys of the world might divert him from the revelations of his art. To the minds of men he became a mere musical abstraction. A Beethoven, who could eat, drink, and love as other mortals, would have ap-

peared an incomprehensible anomaly to them. This abnormal condition of humanity had naturally led to a state of the most profound melancholy, when that fearful evil, so hard for all to bear, but to the musical creator worse than death itself, suddenly fell upon him, and, at the age of little more than thirty, Beethoven was completely, hopelessly, incurably deaf. He then had crept into his lair alone, like a wounded beast of the forest, to hide himself from humanity. "Conceive my deep humiliation," he had written to his brother in the year 1802; "a creature stood by my side, and heard the distant tones of the flute; but I heard nothing! He heard the labourer sing in the fields; but I heard nothing! Despair fell upon me. I was nigh on taking my life with my own hands. But she—Art—held me back. I could not leave the world until I had revealed that which lay within me; and I lived on my hateful life." During this dark period came the "Fidelio"—that "Fidelio" which Beethoven never heard himself—and it failed to attract. It was modelled again, and remodelled; but still the public of Vienna was cold to Beethoven's dramatic effort. When he himself attempted to conduct his work, that pitiless public laughed. He crept more and more deeply into his cold cheerless solitude. Fortunately for the world, he never lost the conviction of the might of his own genius.

But those days had gone by. Habit, like nature, had done much to drape over the rough edges of Beethoven's rocky temper. He had begun to forget the loss of real sound, as his own heavenly orchestra

played more clearly to his soul. A softer and more human spirit had once more taken possession of him. He had again found sympathy with mankind. He would have been no real artist, had he not been cheered also by the growth of his colossal fame. And thus it was that Beethoven, without wholly shaking off the evil demon which beset him, had, at the period of Weber's visit, already peeped more complacently into the outer world, with that strange mixture of openness and shyness, repose and restlessness, flashing animation and deep melancholy, friendly garrulity and dull apathy, which so strangely characterised him up to the last days of his life. In the house where he was wont to dine, when surrounded by known faces, he would even lead the conversation, and express his political opinions in his usual rough, straightforward manner, but generally in terms borrowed from musical phraseology. Metternich's police actually pricked up its long ears at Beethoven's political opinions; but its president, Sedlnitzky, had said, "Let the old bear growl; he can't bite." And the old bear growled on, unheeding. But he was still "The Solitary of the Mountain." He lived alone, walked alone, created alone and shut up in himself. In this respect he was still in the eyes of the Viennese, who saw and heard nothing of him but his works, the invisible "cloud-compeller" of the musical heavens—a mystery and a myth!

About the period when Weber's "Der Freischütz" had appeared, Beethoven had again begun to interest himself in the music of his day. He visited the

noted "musical emporium," took scores upon his knees, and studied them ardently. When "Der Freischütz" became so celebrated, Beethoven even took the score home with him. "I could never have believed it of the poor weak little mannikin," he was heard to say, banging on the score with his fist: "Weber must write operas now; nothing but operas, one after the other." The finale of the second act was still too strange for him. "I see what Weber means," he exclaimed; "but he has put such devilish queer stuff in here! When I read the wild hunt, I can't help laughing; and yet I feel it is the right thing. That is music which must be heard—heard only—and I—I—" and then a heavy sigh.

Weber knew, then, that he had earned Beethoven's respect before his visit. But he felt strangely moved when he entered the great man's poor desolate-looking room. All lay in the wildest disorder—music, money, clothing, on the floor—linen from the wash upon the dirty bed—broken coffee-cups upon the table. The open pianoforte was covered thickly with dust. Beethoven entered to greet his visitors. Benedict has thus described him. "Just so must have looked Lear, or one of Ossian's bards. His thick gray hair was flung upwards, and disclosed the sanctuary of his lofty vaulted forehead. His nose was square, like that of a lion; his chin broad, with those remarkable folds which all his portraits show; his jaws formed as if purposely to crack the hardest nuts; his mouth noble and soft. Over the broad face, seamed with scars from the small-pox, was spread a

dark redness. From under the thick, closely compressed eyebrows gleamed a pair of small flashing eyes. The square broad form of a Cyclops was wrapped in a shabby dressing-gown much torn about the sleeves." Beethoven recognised Weber without a word, embraced him energetically, shouting out, "There you are, my boy; you are a devil of a fellow! God bless you!" handed him at once his famous tablets, then pushed a heap of music from the old sofa, threw himself upon it, and, during a flow of conversation, commenced dressing himself to go out. Beethoven began with a string of complaints about his own position; about the theatres, the public, the Italians, the talk of the day, and, more especially, about his own ungrateful nephew. Weber, who was nervous and agitated, counselled him to tear himself from Vienna, undertake a journey through Germany, to convince himself of the world's judgment of him, and more especially go to England, where his works were more reverenced than in any other country. "Too late! too late!" cried Beethoven, making the pantomime of playing on the piano, and shaking his head sadly. Then he seized on Weber's arm, and dragged him away to the Sauerhof, where he was wont to dine. "Here," wrote Weber afterwards, "we dined together in the happiest mood. The rough repulsive man paid me as much attention as if I were a lady to whom he was making court, and served me at table with the most delicate care. How proud I felt to receive all this kindness and affectionate regard from the great master-spirit! The

day will remain for ever impressed on my mind, as well as on that of all who were present." At table Beethoven turned the conversation to the subject of "Euryanthe," which Weber strove to avoid. "How is the book?" he asked. Weber hastened to reply, "Full of good situations." But Beethoven had caught sight of Haslinger's shake of the head, and burst out laughing: "Ah! the old story!" he shouted; "these German authors never know how to concoct a good opera-book." "But how about 'Fidelio'?" rejoined Weber. "Oh! that was derived from the French," said Beethoven; "and was translated into German out of the Italian." And so the two great composers communed together. And the others sat by, and saw these two heads so closely bent together—from the one of which had sprung the "Eroïca," the "C minor Symphony," and the "Fidelio"—from the other the "Freischütz," "Leier und Schwert," and "Preciosa" —and thought how many treasures of the beautiful might still be there, and compared Weber's long, narrow, scantily-covered head, and refined, spiritual, tender face, with the mighty lion-like facial mass of Beethoven, over which rose a very forest of hair, and reflected how the widely-contrasting genius of the two was so wondrously mirrored in each man, although both glowed with the same artistic fire, and both had the halo of immortality upon their brows. But the time came for departure. Again and again Beethoven embraced Weber, as though he could not part with him. It was long before he would relinquish Weber's long thin delicate hand from the grasp of his

bulky fist. "Success to your new opera! If I can, I will come on your first night," he cried; and so they parted. Weber returned to Vienna deeply moved.

Thus had a friendly intercourse been established between the two celebrated composers, who never quite understood each other's genius, but who might have loved each other as artists and men. Unfortunately, malicious mischief-making came to cool the friendship. A criticism on Beethoven, written in Weber's very youthful days, was laid before the musical giant as a crime of weight; and the cordiality was strangled in its birth, although enmity there never was between the two.

Weber began his rehearsals of "Euryanthe" by reading the opera-book to the whole assembled troop, including the chorus-singers and the "supers," and with such admirable declamation, that stage-manager Gottdank laughingly offered him an engagement as actor. Above all, he sought to explain to every one concerned the nature of the plot. He himself had made the book so much a portion of himself, that he could no longer feel its innate incoherency. But, after this reading, all the weak points in the development of the story were again painfully brought before him. The poor composer was stormed with questions, and demands for further explanation. "Who are these dead lovers, Udo and Emma?" "Why does Euryanthe set so much store by their secret?" "Why doesn't the woman defend herself, and tell Lysiart he is a liar to his face?" and so on *ad infinitum*. Weber again hung his head in despair. He

once more returned to his idea of explaining the obscure points by a *tableau vivant*, during the overture, representing Euryanthe at the grave of Emma, with the spectre of the unhappy maid floating above, and Eglantine listening in the vault. This idea he had even indicated in the overture. But, necessary as was such an explanation, the authorities of the theatre, and, above all, the susceptible old authoress, declared themselves violently opposed to such a hazardous innovation; and the idea was eventually abandoned, although the passage in the overture remained untouched.

The rehearsals of the opera progressed, however, and progressed far beyond the composer's expectations. The sympathy and zeal of all the singers concerned were so great, that the usually allotted time for each rehearsal passed away, hour by hour, and yet none were wearied of their work. "My poor children must be dying of hunger," said Madame Grünbaum once, with a sigh; but it was the only murmur among all. The very chorus-singers, instead of running off as usual, begged only for a little rest, that they might go on with labours, which were labours of love to them. The management stood aghast with wonder at this request: such an occurrence was unheard of in their theatrical annals. As the rehearsals were multiplied, and even more and more prolonged, the enthusiasm of the entire company increased instead of flagging. Weber was enchanted at this unlooked-for result. "Beloved heart," he wrote to his wife, "you would have shed tears of joy to see

their fire and enthusiasm, and hear them sing with an animation, which I am almost necessitated to repress. Think of their crying with emotion at rehearsal till the tears came into my own eyes. Can any thing be more affecting than such testimony as this?" "Would that this enthusiasm," he wrote again, "could be transferred, even only in a portion, to the public!" The most strangely-contrasting alternations of humour fell upon Weber now. After rehearsal, courage, hope, confidence were sure to animate him. In the evening, after witnessing the performance of the Italians, and feeling the pulse of the public taste, he was in despair. At dinner he would say with joy, "It is all right!" at the Ludlam's Höhle the cold fit would again attack him; and he would cry, "It must have been the devil himself, who tempted me to write for Vienna!"

Fortunately, Weber, deeply occupied as he was, remained ignorant of the "dirty work" going on behind his back. Strange to say, his detractors were chiefly among those very persons for whose fine taste he had written. Franz Schubert, who was present at some of the rehearsals, said, "How Weber will manage all his awkward masses, I can't conceive; he had better have left it alone." Gottdank, the stage-manager, one of his professed friends, never scrupled to assert that it was "hard to understand, and harder to sing such difficult learned music." Such remarks, all more or less of a depreciatory description, soon crept out into the public; and the interest about Weber's work, which people had anticipated as a phe-

nomenon of good sound German music, diminished day by day. Had Weber been aware of all that was passing around him, it is impossible to suppose that his overture, which he finished in moments of leisure, could ever have become, what it really was, his greatest and most perfect symphonic work: his susceptible spirit would inevitably have sunk under the depressing influence of such detrimental reports.

Weber still believed in his "evil star," and expected its intervention in all important events of his life. "It will demand its tribute of sorrow and annoyance, you will see," he was wont to say. On the occasion of "Euryanthe" the tribute had to be paid, but not in the manner Weber might have expected. "That confounded old Chez is here," he wrote to his wife, "and plagues me out of my life. She makes ten thousand alterations in the words in correcting the proofs, and leaves me not a moment's rest." Had this been all! But during the correction of the proofs, "that confounded old Chez," who was always in money difficulties, took it into her head to think that her "great poem" deserved a far higher remuneration than that which had been stipulated with Weber, and received, at the time, with joy and gratitude. She now declared that the sum was insufficient, after all her many alterations; and she was continually pestering Weber with fresh demands. For the sake of peace the composer promised her an equivalent percentage upon his own remuneration, whenever "Euryanthe" might be played on any other of the German stages. She heard that Weber was in treaty with

Berlin, and required her per-centage at once, "down on the nail." Weber refused any payment in anticipation. From that moment the rabid old woman never left him a moment's peace. Letters of abuse, importunate messengers, bullying friends, were let loose on the unfortunate man almost every hour of the day. Weber was "sick with disgust." The "Chez" threatened law-suits, threatened to prevent the representation of "Euryanthe," threatened to get the opera hissed. Weber laughed at her threats. But the mad old authoress was not a woman to accept the strait-waistcoat put on her. She rushed about Vienna, screaming to all who would hear, and, indeed, to all who would not, about Weber's avarice and cruelty; she wept bitter tears, as a wretched, forlorn, oppressed, and unprotected female. People at last began to listen, and to shake their heads; Weber's own friends among the number. To hit Weber in one of his tenderest points, his over-anxious regard for public opinion, was to crush him at once; and by this blow "the Chez" won the victory. Weber consented to pay fifty ducats out of his own pocket. "At all events," he said, "I have now done with the horrid woman for ever." So wondrously was the fantastic element of superstition mixed up in Weber's usually sensible mind with all the realities of life, that, strange to say, he was almost rejoiced at all these bitter annoyances. He felt that his "evil star" had received its "burnt-offering," and had been sufficiently propitiated to leave his opera unharmed. "The Chez affair," he wrote to his wife, "has done enough to

quiet my star; and now I am in the best spirits again."

But these "best spirits" were doomed to receive once more a check at the last rehearsal but one. For the first time the entire work, with the overture, was given. Without any repetitions it lasted four hours. Many of Weber's friends were in the pit, and came away with lengthened faces. Weber felt the heavy weight of so long a work oppressively. It was he himself, who made, at dinner that day, that far from brilliant joke, so often since attributed to others, "My Euryanthe should be called Ennuyante." Reports of the tedious length of the opera soon ran round the city. "Weber writes for eternity; so of course his opera must be eternally long," was one of the jokes of the day. Favourable impressions were still more crippled; enthusiasm for the great German opera sank day by day. The excitement, however, in the musical portion of the public, was still considerable. The Germano-Italian war was waged more fiercely than ever in each camp; and nowhere, in drawing-room or tavern, were there men of education gathered together without a hostile skirmish, for which "Euryanthe" gave the pretext. "German art may still delight," was inscribed on the banner of the one party; "The attempt is preposterous and absurd," on that of the other. In the gay, animated, wealthy imperial city, where the policy of Metternich had fettered, not only all political, but almost all literary and scientific activity, the production of a new opera was considered an affair of general and mighty

importance. At the last rehearsal of "Euryanthe," on the 24th of October, the theatre was crowded, as was the custom in Vienna, by all that was illustrious in art and literature—by all the patrons of the arts, by all the dilettanti of the day. The result was a brilliant one. The performance was admirably given, and the applause unusually great. But Weber was far from happy in what was generally considered as a prognostic of success. He only feared it might rouse the hostile camp to exert themselves to the utmost in their antagonism.

Nothing, at the same time, could be more characteristic of Weber's command of himself, than the fact, that but two hours before the curtain rose on that new work, which he himself considered as the great decisive touchstone of his artistic fame and future, he should have sat quietly down to calm the anxious fears of his beloved wife. "I own I have been wandering about to-day in somewhat restless fashion," he wrote in this letter. "But that lies in the very nature of things. Still Heaven has been merciful to me as yet. My star has had its sacrifice: and so I rely on God and my 'Euryanthe.'"

The evening of the 25th October—the evening so pregnant with fate to Weber—arrived. The Kärnthnerthor theatre was filled with a compact mass. The nobility and moneyed world were in all their splendour in the boxes, giving the house an unusually festive air. In the pit and galleries was the more strictly musical portion of the Vienna world. Scarcely one single member of the Ludlam's Höhle failed. Public

honour was to be paid to the new associate, whom it had honoured in its sanctuary. The pit cast angry looks at the boxes, whose brilliant occupants dared to chatter and to laugh. A hundred pens were ready —a thousand fists were clenched, to do battle in the cause of German art.

The excitement was unluckily diverted from its true object by an absurd occurrence. Just before the commencement of the performance a violent tumult arose in the pit. Angry cries, scoffing shouts, and shrieks of laughter burst from the waving throng. Suddenly, above the masses, appeared the form of a fat shabbily-dressed old woman, with bangled hat and draggling shawl, who insisted upon pushing forward from bench to bench, shrieking out, amidst the Homeric laughter of the whole house, "Make room! make room for me, I say! I tell you I am the poetess! the poetess!" "The poetess! the poetess!" yelled the laughing crowd. Nor did the tumult of laughter subside, when, amidst the angry expostulations of a whole bench, the obese form of the Frau von Chezy squeezed itself down into a seat.

But now Weber entered the orchestra; and the yells of laughter were changed into shouts of applause. With difficulty could the composer give the usual sign for the commencement. At last came a silence of death. The overture—so different from that of "Der Freischütz," and yet even as rich in new and striking instrumental effects, chivalric, tender, and passionate by turns—now began. By some mischance, it was played far less well than at the last

rehearsal; and, though applauded, this grand poetic work failed entirely of the effect it was afterwards destined to produce. An attempt at an "encore" was not successful. The opening choruses, Adolar's noble romance, and even Lysiart's entrance, did not command the enthusiasm and applause which were expected. Not until Adolar's inspired phrase, "I rely on God and my Euryanthe," was the public warmed up into universal acclamation of applause. But at that point Weber was tumultuously called forth. At the entrance of Sonntag, then in all the bloom of her exquisite beauty, and attired in the most becoming of costumes, another storm burst out. So long was it protracted, so often was it renewed, that Weber turned to the musician next him with the words, "Ey! ey! they are firing-off all their ammunition already." After this ebullition of public feeling, a natural reaction of calm ensued; and it continued until the duett between the two women again aroused the slumbering public, and was stormily re-demanded. The great air of Eglantine passed away without demonstration. With the finale, however, the attention was once again aroused: the solo passages had to be repeated: once more was an ovation given to the "pet;" and once more was Weber unanimously called forth. But the reaction, which Weber had feared, was to come. The public had in truth fired-off its ammunition too quickly. With "repeats" and applause the first act had lasted an hour and a half. The interval between the acts was tediously long. The public grew weary already. The duett between Lysiart

and Eglantine, admirably sung and acted, awoke a passing burst of enthusiasm; and the duett, "Nimm hin die Seele mein," even excited the applause of the Italian faction in the boxes, and was "encored." But the second act ended with but moderate applause; and although the maestro was again summoned before the curtain, the voice of the opposition was now to be distinctly heard. Another long "wait" between the acts: the weariness and the dissatisfaction of the public were visibly on the increase. During the third act the singers grew nervous and showed symptoms of fatigue; and, to the dismay of Weber's friends, boxes and stalls began to be gradually emptied. They hung their heads, and almost gave up the cause as lost. All at once the Huntsman's Chorus, so new in its rhythm, so wonderful in its horn effects, again drew down a storm of enthusiastic applause. Three times was the chorus repeated, amidst general acclamation. Fresh courage took possession of all hearts. Men breathed again. The hostile ranks bowed their heads in silence before this burst of delight. Sceptical criticism was vanquished. The deserted places were even refilled to some extent. The air of Euryanthe, "Zu ihm! zu ihm!" admirably given by the Sonntag, again carried the audience to a pitch of frenzy; and the "pet," already half-dead with fatigue, was again recalled. And now the melodious "May song" was encored without any consideration for the lateness of the hour. The recurrence of the phrase, "Nimm hin die Seele mein," was greeted with delight by the audience, although already almost tired out; and the

final chorus brought down the curtain with renewed applause.

To all appearance, spite of the incidental fluctuations of opinion, "Euryanthe" was a brilliant success. At least on the mind of the composer himself, too excited to observe acutely, that impression was firmly fixed. When, nigh upon midnight, he found himself among his allied troops at the "Ludlam,"—troops, it must be said, composed of all the musical, literary, and scientific intelligence of Vienna,—Weber received his best triumph. There was but one voice among all. His work was hailed as the greatest of his age—as a model of the beautiful in art for times to come. Weber was crowned with laurels and love. Not until past two in the morning was the excited assembly broken up. But, although so weary as to be scarce able to hold up his head, Weber would not retire to rest, until he had written to his "dearest and best," his wife. "Thank God, as I do, beloved life," he wrote, "for the glorious success of 'Euryanthe.' Weary as I am, I must still say a sweet 'good-night' to my beloved Lina, and cry 'Victoria!'" On the morrow he gave a detailed account of all the incidents of the representation. In his letter Weber says that he himself prevented the "encore" of his overture, in order not to prolong a performance already far too lengthy. With his artists he was enraptured: and of the choruses he says, "The finales ought only to be heard from such chorus-singers as these. I myself was deeply moved by them." In conclusion he writes, "All the company seemed in a state of

ecstasy: singers, choruses, orchestra—all were drunk, as it were, with joy . . . " Then, after a detailed description of all the homage he received in the Ludlam's Höhle, he adds, "So closed a day which must ever remain impressed upon my mind, and which, I cannot but hope, may take a place in the history of art."

When this genuine burst of delight in Weber himself is compared with all the most impartial reports extant respecting the production of the "Euryanthe," it becomes a question whether the composer's unmitigated satisfaction is to be ascribed to a natural self-deception, or to his desire to gratify his anxious wife. It is possible that both feelings may have been in play. That the former exercised a very considerable power over him is clearly evidenced, however, by his letter to his friend Lichtenstein, at the same period. In this his own conviction of the immense success of his new work is unmistakably apparent. It overflows with the genuine delight of a gratified heart. One sentence alone, perhaps, implies a shadow of doubt. "As you may well expect," Weber writes to his friend, "envy raises its head with energy, and even falsehood is not recoiled from." Weber had yearned for a success, which at all events should not fall below that of his "Freischütz." He could not, would not, believe his prayer had not been granted.

In truth, Weber had ground enough for any amount of self-deception. The second representation went in every respect far better than the first. The applause was louder and longer, and bestowed more

upon the work than its executants; the shouting and calling before the curtain had no end; and yet all who had any acquaintance with the public of Vienna felt that all the applause meant nothing more than homage to the composer, and that the opera would never remain "upon the bills." "There's noise enough," remarked one, who well knew how to feel the pulse of his public; "but it doesn't come from the heart." Weber, who had less knowledge of the Viennese, had every right to believe in a genuine and permanent success.

On the day following the second representation of "Euryanthe," the Steiner Emporium was crammed to suffocation by all the literati and musical celebrities of the Austrian capital, to discuss the great artistic event of the day. On this occasion almost all the literary men were stanch on Weber's side; the professional musicians almost all ranged against him. It was now that Franz Schubert entered into open hostility against Weber. In his usual rough manner, which his friends called open-heartedness, he denounced Weber's opera as utterly unmusical, deficient in all form or order, without any solid foundation for the display of real talent, and, when science was attempted, giving clear evidence that the composer had studied in the school of a mere mountebank. The last allusion applied, of course, to Vogler. "The man abuses Rossini," continued the rival composer; "and yet, when he does contrive to catch a scrap of melody, he is sure to crush it to death, like a mouse in a trap, with his overwhelming orchestra-

tion." And Schubert was a powerful enemy. In the midst of the noisy whirl of discussion, and the skirmishing of defence and attack, the giant Beethoven entered the shop. "How did the new opera go?" he cried, as he bustled in. "A great success!" wrote Haslinger. "I am delighted," cried the great man,—"delighted! Yes; the German can still hold his own above all their Italian sing-song! And little Sonntag; how did she sing?" he asked again, eagerly. "Exquisitely!" Beethoven positively smirked with pleasure. Then, turning to young Benedict, who was present, he said, "Tell Herr von Weber I would have come, but—for many long years, you know—" He pointed to his ears, and rushed from the shop.

The critics of the Vienna papers, who at that time consisted of some of the ablest men of the day, were chiefly in favour of Weber and his music. For the book of the opera, it was true, not a word of approval could be found; but all the more credit was given to the composer for the life, and warmth, and exquisite colour his fine genius had known how to bestow on such dull, cold, pale materials. True, there were found some to say that Weber had gone beyond the natural sphere of his own talent, and, finding himself lost, had supplied the want of freshness of ideas by sheer labour, and, lacking the clearness of simplicity, had fallen into the "bizarre." But, upon the whole, Weber's true feeling, powerful colouring, and effective characterisation, and, above all, his originality, which belonged to no school, found general appreciation.

It must be supposed that the enthusiastic acclamations with which "Euryanthe" was at first received by the general public of Vienna were due, in some respect, to its affection for the composer of "Der Freischütz;" in another, to its desire, after all the homage bestowed upon the Italian opera, to celebrate the advent of a German master with a German work fit to do honour to his country. Some such reason, at all events, must be sought to explain the contrast between the first success and ultimate result. Scarcely had Weber left Vienna, when a sudden blight fell on "Euryanthe." At the eighth representation the theatre was nearly empty. To this sudden fall from such a pinnacle, other circumstances may have in a degree contributed. Weber himself, with his practical knowledge and nice dramatic feeling, set to work, immediately after the first representation, to use the famous "pruning-knife." Portions of the music, which had flagged, were cut out, passages modified, and every thing done with judgment to give a more lively and energetic movement to the opera. But when capellmeister Kreutzer was left with the work upon his hands, he resolved to cut out another half-hour's music, without any just regard to musical unity, or dramatic continuity of action. The work thus mutilated, instead of gaining attraction by being shortened, lost its last hold on the public. The singers, too, relaxed in zeal and fire. They all, even to Sonntag, sang like mere machines; the orchestra was no more the same; and the public became disgusted. After twenty representations, "Euryanthe"

was withdrawn. A better age for musical appreciation has arrived since then: and "Euryanthe" holds as high and sure a place in the hearts of the German people as "Der Freischütz" and "Oberon."

A letter, written some weeks afterwards by the composer to his friend Gottfried Weber, shows that he himself had then greatly modified his own expectations. In it he says that it would have been "ridiculous to suppose the masses could be attracted by 'Euryanthe' as they were by 'Der Freischütz;'" and that the exaggeration of his friends had done him harm. In a similar strain he also wrote to his friend Danzi, the following year, on the subject of his opera. "At all events," says Weber, after thanking his old friend for his high appreciation of the work, "I have not attempted to fall down and worship before the spirit of the age; and if, without knowing it, I should have done so, the devil must have sat on my back."

The excitement of the production of "Euryanthe" over, Weber's fever of "heimweh" attacked him again with redoubled violence; and nothing could have any longer held him back from flying to his beloved ones at home, had he not been the most conscientious and punctilious of men, and looked upon the duties of society, in making visits to those who had shown him friendship or civility, as great moral obligations. Moreover, an audience with the Emperor, to whom he was desirous of dedicating his new work, was fixed for the 1st November; and Weber could not leave Vienna. The Saxon ambassador, with a genuine reflex of the feelings of his minister

at home, had declined to employ his intermediation to obtain this audience. It had been effected by the spontaneous offer of Prince Trautmannsdorf, the imperial oberstkämmerer, who was full of zeal for Weber's service.

The day which was to come as a release to the heimweh-tormented man arrived; and the composer was received by the chatty, ever-friendly Emperor in his private apartments. "I haven't heard your opera yet," said Franz; "but I hear it is capital. All right! It is very nice of you to wish to dedicate the work to me. They have worried you out of your life—haven't they?—those Italians!" he pursued, smiling. When Weber assured him that his rivals had subdued him more by their own excellence than by their intrigues, he laughed outright. "Yes, yes," he said, "the war is over; but the row still goes on." No wonder that Weber, who vastly appreciated the favour of the great ones of the earth, should have written to his wife after the interview, "How simple and kind was the great Monarch!" As a recompense for the dedication, he afterwards received a magnificent diamond snuff-box, of great worth.

On the 5th November Weber left Vienna. But happy as he was to find himself once more on the way to his own dear home, it was not without feelings of pride that he looked back on the imperial city, which had witnessed one of the most important events of his eventful life, and with the conviction that he had trodden nobly, in obedience to the dictates of his genius, a new and dangerous path in the realm of art.

Rest and solitude were precious boons to Weber on his journey. He was now able to commune once more unhindered with his own spirit, and weigh his own genius in the balance of self-probation. During the two days of his solitary journey to Prague, he sat thrown back in a corner of his carriage, without a movement or a sound. What results were to spring from this task of severe silent self-examination, the future was to show.

In Prague, the management had delayed the fiftieth performance of "Der Freischütz," in order to await the great composer's expected arrival. Once more did the public of Prague roar with delight, as the well-known little figure of the great composer again entered that orchestra. Once more was Weber's heart touched, and filled with joy almost to suffocation. But that joy was as nothing when compared to the delight with which, as husband and father, he hurried through the entrance to his own little nest, and clasped his beloved Caroline and his little Max in his arms, and knew that all his yearning was at an end. That evening the celebrated man, whose name rang throughout Europe, and who had seen half Germany at his feet, sat happy and contented in his little chamber, with his wife by his side and his child on his knee, eating his supper of Vienna sausages, and crying again and again, "My darlings, now is my heart at rest!"

Weber was so little accustomed to any testimony of appreciation in his adopted home, that it was with a sentiment of the profoundest astonishment, on his

return to his duties at the theatre, that he found the whole company assembled, with Hellwig, the stage-manager, at their head, and was led to a festive seat, behung with garlands, to receive the homage of the whole Saxon troop. Choruses were sung in his honour; the final chorus of "Euryanthe" having been selected to terminate the cantata, thus arranged to words of welcome. For the first time in Dresden Weber now received that tribute of homage, which had been so often given to him elsewhere. He was deeply moved—moved, above all, because he looked upon it as a happy augury for his future efforts on the Dresden stage. Another unexpected satisfaction came to him also in a royal command to prepare his "Euryanthe" for immediate representation. This pleasant prospect was frustrated, however, by the indisposition of Madame Schröder-Devrient, now a wife, and shortly to be a mother.

Unfortunately, the year was destined to close with a disappointment, which Weber took deeply to heart, even to the further detriment of his ever-failing health and strength. He had suffered keenly from the failure of his efforts to obtain the appointment of his friend Gänsbacher, whom he longed to have by his side. More than ever, since his return from Vienna, he felt the want of some truly congenial soul, with which to communicate all his impressions in his own sphere of art. But now Morlacchi was again absent on leave. Schubert was again incapacitated from his duties by illness. So Weber again applied for the appointment of Gänsbacher to aid him in the accumu-

lated duties which fell so unjustly on his overburdened shoulders. To his joy, almost to his intense surprise, his petition was at once accorded. He wrote off directly to his dear friend a triumphant letter, forwarded him funds for his journey, prepared a room for his reception, and, in his delight, was at once a younger and a stronger man. Instead of the expected friend himself, came a letter from Gänsbacher, to say that, wearied with "hope deferred," he had, but a few days before, accepted the post of capellmeister to the Cathedral of St. Stephen, in Vienna.

So near the fulfilment of his long-cherished hopes, and so cruelly disappointed, Weber was smitten down as if with a deadly blow.

CHAPTER X.

TIMES OF TROUBLE.

A PAUSE was now to ensue in the exercise of Weber's creative powers. The long interval, in which his genius apparently lay fallow, must have seemed astonishing to those who had been accustomed to witness the restless industry with which every spare moment of the brief time allotted to him had been occupied. It went far beyond the period usually necessary for the recovery of his mind's elasticity after any great and fatiguing exertion. But the truth was, that the spirit, which had soared victoriously over all sorrows and annoyances in a healthier state of body, now flagged in the constant struggle against inward suffering. This sad condition was increased by circumstances which were ceaselessly pouring drops of gall upon Weber's heart. They arose, too, in a quarter whence he had been wont to derive only joy and honour; and this fact materially added to their bitterness.

Great as had been Weber's desire to obtain a crowning success for his "Euryanthe," it was impos-

sible for him to conceal from himself that the success had been at most of a very partial character. In some of the cities of Germany, such as Frankfort, Cassell, and Prague, the opera had fallen flat. In others, its acceptance had been very doubtful. It was only in very few that it had been hailed as a complete success. The fact was indubitable, however; and Weber was reluctantly obliged to admit, either that the æsthetic feeling of the public in most of the cities was far below the mark, or that the tendency of his music was not in accordance with their sympathies. In writing to his friend Danzi, then capellmeister in Carlsruhe, respecting the production of the opera in that city, he showed how much his hopeful anticipations had fallen. "The expectations of the masses," ran one portion of this letter, "have been puffed up to such an absurd and impossible pitch by the wonderful success of "Der Freischütz," that now, when I lay before them a simple serious work, which only aims at truth of expression, passion, and characteristic delineation, without any of the exciting elements of its predecessor, what can I expect? Be it as God will!"

One source of consolation was derived from as unexpected a quarter, as was to be that of his bitter anger and vexation. It was found at home in Dresden. The reasons for the delay in the production of "Euryanthe" on the Dresden stage had ceased; Caroline had stood godmother to the new-born child of Madame Schröder-Devrient on the 9th of March; and on the 16th, Weber was able to see his prima

donna on the stage, at the first rehearsal of his opera. In a fortnight from that time, Weber took off his cap to the assembled company, as was his wont when he was pleased, and smilingly cried, "Ladies and gentlemen, the opera is all ready now!" Great indeed must have been the stage-mechanism, employed by Weber in the rehearsal of works of art, when he himself, the composer of so heavy and difficult an opera, by the complete and accurate execution of which he naturally set so great a store, was able thus, in so brief a time, to express his entire satisfaction with executants. The enthusiasm, zeal, and industry of the entire operatic company in the study of Weber's opera had been without a parallel in the history of the Dresden stage. The judgment of all the great authorities in art and taste that had been present at the rehearsals, was quickly spread throughout the public, and prepared a most favourable feeling for Weber's new opera. He himself felt that he was rising above the old prejudices. Caroline was so delighted with these unaccustomed omens of success, that she was continually giving way to her high spirits in all sorts of practical jokes, which sometimes the capellmeister received with his usual joyous appreciation of fun, sometimes looked upon with angry mien. Now she dressed-up the great hound with garlands and wreaths of laurel, and stuck him upon the prompter's box, holding a copy of verses in his mouth, with the most comical gravity. Now she hung incongruous objects on the spears of the huntsmen, and raised a shout of laughter from every per-

son on the stage. When these jokes, however, interfered with the business of the hour, Weber would peer with lightning looks through his spectacles, rap violently on his desk, and fulminate against the culprits.

Eleven rehearsals sufficed to prepare "Euryanthe" for the Dresden stage. Never was there a greater representative of the principal female character than was Schröder-Devrient at that epoch of her career. The orchestra played to Weber's thorough heart's content. Fortunately for the composer, the Dresden public had heard contradictory reports of the opera from other cities, and had not raised its expectations too high; nor did it think, as good luck would have it, of taking up the representation as a battle between the great contending parties. It was able therefore to sit in judgment, without feverish excitement or partial passion, and exercise its own taste in calm repose. The result of the performance, then, was exactly what such an important classical work deserved. The applause was not extravagant; but, at the same time, well bestowed. Every point, even to the most delicate, was taken up and fully appreciated. The public showed the composer that it fully comprehended the greatness and excellence of his work: the composer received the happy conviction that he was understood and admired by his public. In writing to Lichtenstein on the subject of the first representation of "Euryanthe" in the Saxon capital, Weber called it "a brilliant triumph." Of singers, choruses, orchestra, all concerned, he expressed him-

self with unquestionable delight. "There is but one voice," he wrote, "on the subject. Every one places the opera far higher in worth than the 'Freischütz.'" Even Tieck declared to his friends that his emotion was so great after the performance that he could not speak out his feelings, and that Weber had passages in his music, which Glück, and even Mozart, might have envied. Great praise from one so chary of laudation! In fact, so unequivocal was the enthusiastic welcome given by the public of Dresden to the "Euryanthe," that the Saxon capital may be said to date, from that moment, its honourable repute of being the cradle of the new school of music—a title, which it has not only preserved to this day, but supported with increased effect.

So much the more distressing, by contrast, became to Weber the cruel trial, to which allusion has already been made, reserved for him elsewhere. It was of more importance to Weber that his great work should be judged before the forum of a Berlin public, than that of any other city of Germany. To his mind, it was a question of life or death, how the tendency of his genius would be there appreciated. He knew that in Berlin, the second capital of Germany, the great central point of all North-German thought and feeling, he should find a public possessing all the æsthetic qualities necessary to the judgment of his work. Thus, every difficulty which stood in the way of the accomplishment of his great desire to be heard in Berlin, was a far deeper blow to his fast-failing strength, both morally and physically,

than he dared avow to the world, to his friends, or even to himself. Alas, the difficulties were legion!

All began auspiciously for the accomplishment of Weber's ardent wish. At the end of the previous year he had sent the score of his opera to Count Brühl, and received the offer of a remuneration of 900 thalers (one hundred of which were to be paid to the authoress) for the right of representation. In his zeal for the cause of German music, and his friendship for Weber, the Count had overlooked one little matter. He had forgotten that, according to the new arrangement of the Berlin theatres, it had been left to a committee of six members, under the presidency of Spontini, and with the title of "General Musical Direction," to decide alone upon such contingencies, and that he no longer possessed the right even to offer his own judgment. He had failed, moreover, even had he pursued a strictly legal course, to prepare the way by a propitiation of the exclusive committee: and there could be no doubt that, in Spontini's eyes, a further triumph for his victorious rival would be far from a desirable event. The inconsiderate and illegal proceeding of Count Brühl necessarily not only angered the committee, but excited among its members the most violent opposition against the work, upon the production of which in Berlin, Weber had built all his dearest hopes. The affection of a friend had once more done him more injury than his worst enemy's hate.

Still, at the commencement of the year 1824, all seemed to be going on well; for at that period Count

Brühl wrote to Weber, requesting his opinion as to the "cast" of his opera. But shortly afterwards the composer's first annoyances in the affair, which was destined to do such irreparable injury to his health, as well as to his happiness, commenced by a letter from Count Brühl himself, requiring further modifications in the length of the opera, inasmuch as the destined prima donna had declared herself unable to undertake so wearying a part as that of Euryanthe, and announcing his regret to hear that the overture, when played at a concert in Berlin, had made no impression whatever. Weber was at once mortified; and he replied, not without some irritation, that he had already made sufficient "cuts," further modifications having taken place in the Dresden representation; that it was absurd for a prima donna, who sang the "Vestale" of Spontini, to consider a part, sung by the Sonntag, too great an exertion for her; and that, disagreeable as it was to hear his overture had not pleased, he could not but conclude that the band had been unable to grapple with its difficulties. "Yes, yes! I see perfectly well," he wrote in conclusion, "that my poor Euryanthe has still much to suffer. Patience, however; and, after all, I can live without composing operas."

There is no doubt that the sickening man was already much wounded, even although he actually did make other "cuts" in his opera, to meet the requirements of his Berlin friend and patron. But he was far from being prepared for the blow which was shortly to be dealt him. He had already received

the announcement from Count Brühl, that "Euryanthe" would be produced, in all probability, about the middle of March; when, on the following day, a letter from Spontini was laid before him. In this communication, couched in the choicest terms of cold and formal politeness, for which the French language could find fittest expression, the wily Italian, after a profusion of phrases of admiration and regard, expounded to his German rival the sin of which Count Brühl had been guilty against the high committee and its president, by daring to make terms for the production of an opera, which had not been preliminarily proposed, approved, and accepted by the powers that were. This fact of high treason established, the Berlin monarch of music went on to say, that all the journals had spoken unfavourably of the opera of "Euryanthe," except one paper, in an exaggerated notice, "evidently emanating from the same pen which had written so witty a satire against Olympia, and several other attacks in the *Gazette de Voss*." After an enumeration of other great operas, which the Berlin Musical Direction was bound to bring out in preference, the letter concluded with a chronicle of lavish apologies and professions of esteem. Weber's spirit was justly roused at this politely insulting letter; and he replied in a vigorous strain. He protested warmly against any knowledge of new arrangements, which had never reached the public ear, or had in any way been laid before him. "You do me the compliment to say," he continued, "'il me suffit qu'un ouvrage porte votre nom, pour en avoir

la haute opinion que vous méritez à juste titre.' What, then, can prevent its representation? Which of the six members would venture to put his opinion above your own?" The sneering allusion to the "exaggerated notice inserted by the same pen which had written the witty satire on Olympia," was one under which Weber could not remain passive. "It seems to me indisputable," he wrote, "that certain persons think they can best curry favour with the honourable General Music Direction by saying all they can against your humble servant. But of that satire I know nothing; nor do I see what connexion it can have with the representation of my opera in Berlin. Certainly much has been written in a sense unfavourable to my 'Euryanthe,' but assuredly just as much in praise. Some untoward chance seems never to have placed before your eyes the latter notices. I should think myself unworthy, if I were to lay before you all which I have heard relative to the opposition made to me in Berlin. You yourself say," he continued, in another portion of the letter, "that you well know 'l'incertitude des vicissitudes du théâtre, les cabales, les intrigues, l'envie de toutes les disgraces attachées à notre belle carrière.' I do not need to remind you, consequently, of the fate, in Paris, of your 'Olympia,' the brilliant success of which I had the good fortune to witness in Berlin; or that, although 'Figaro' at first failed in Vienna, and 'Don Juan' at Frankfurt, the high pinnacle on which these works stand in public opinion now is a source of comfort to those followers in art who look up to these bright luminaries."

Just as may have been Weber's indignation at Spontini's shifty conduct, hypocrisy, and evident desire to insult him, or his scorn of the pettiness dictated by the Italian's wounded vanity, it cannot be denied that he showed considerable want of tact, and of complete candour also, in his correspondence. His attempt, on the one hand, to blind a man so experienced in theatrical matters as Spontini, as to the real result of the production of "Euryanthe," and his affected ignorance of the fatal "elephant" satire, were alike prejudicial to his own cause. By entering into the lists of intrigue, of which Spontini was such a consummate master, he was sure to find an antagonist with whom he was wholly unable to cope; whilst on the other hand, he only wounded more deeply the irritable but all-powerful monarch of music in Berlin, and drove him to use a power which was only subordinate to that of the King, or his minister Prince Wittgenstein.

The correspondence which ensued between Spontini, Weber, Brühl, Wittgenstein, and others, on the subject, was as voluminous as painful; and, however just may have been the complaints of the Saxon capellmeister, it was by no means to his advantage. Weber was urged on by his ardent desire to see his opera produced on the boards of the Berlin theatre, to words and acts as indiscreet as they were impatient. Count Brühl was led into a reckless intemperance, which only served to ruin his own diplomacy; whilst Spontini, with his polished style, his command of irony, his cunning, and his tact, contrived to preserve his

balance, and wield his weapons with consummate skill.

Another attempt also, made by Count Brühl, to carry the affair by a *coup de main*, made matters still worse by throwing oil upon the flames. Regardless of what had already taken place, and hurried away by irritation, he issued an imperative order to the General Direction to prepare for the production of "Euryanthe" as soon as possible, sending at the same time the score, with the intimation that it would be perfectly unnecessary for the committee to use its judgment with regard to the music of such a man as Weber. The score was returned to Count Brühl by the angry Spontini, with ironical thanks for the kindness of the Count in desiring to spare the General Musical Direction the trouble of examining the work; but with a renewed reference to the standing instructions, which a superior order could alone cancel. Neither Brühl or Weber gained any thing but further mortification from this unlucky and ill-judged attempt.

But meanwhile, that which injudicious friendship for the composer could not effect, the powerful engine of public opinion was pushing onwards by degrees. The fact of the increasing pressure from without was communicated to Spontini by the members of the General Direction. The Italian capellmeister felt that he must eventually give way. The gratification of his pride by the victory he had already gained, contributed, perhaps, also to his ultimate resolve, which was to change his tactics, and allow the preparations for

the production of "Euryanthe" to proceed. But in this seeming acquiescence with the plans of his antagonists Spontini had, as usual, a double purpose. He was no less furious than before at the thought of any successful production of his rival's opera; but his cunning showed him two advantages to be derived from pushing forward a representation of "Euryanthe" as speedily as possible. He knew that, on the one hand, he should be obtaining favour in the eyes of the Berlin public,—for the opinion of which the vain man had an overweening reverence,—by his seeming disinterested conduct; whilst on the other he had an opportunity of crushing the opera, by hurrying the rehearsals, and by manœuvering so that it should be only given a very few nights, and then "shelved" altogether. The leave of absence of both Bader and Madame Seidler was shortly to commence; and Madame Schultz, the other prima donna, was in a situation which would prevent her appearance at the same period. So, by pressing forward the first representation, he knew that the opera must very shortly be withdrawn, and thus made to appear a failure. The plan was cunningly laid; and in Spontini's eyes it could not fail to succeed. At the same time, in order to place himself in the best possible light with the Berlin public, Spontini took the opportunity, without the knowledge of his colleagues, to publish in the public prints an order of the day from the General Musical Direction, in which, by a mixture of falsehood and misrepresentation with some truth, he endeavoured to make it appear that he him-

self had been the great and zealous promoter of the interests of Weber's "Euryanthe;" and that, if any failure ensued, the responsibility of such a result could not in any way be laid upon him. In this proceeding the wily Italian, however, somewhat overshot his mark. Not only Count Brühl and the capellmeister of the theatre, but the members of the Musical Direction also, were indignant at this distortion of the real facts of the case: and all parties now published a counter-statement, in which, it is true, all the "secrets of the prison-house" could not be openly revealed, but in which they unanimously combined in a protest against a notice which had been published without their knowledge, concurrence, or authorisation.

Spontini and Weber, meanwhile, continued their bitter correspondence, with reciprocal reproaches, couched in the smoothest terms; and in this the German composer, who, though he spoke French with fluency, was not such an adept in writing the foreign language, and yet adopted it on finding that his adversary was continually pretending to misunderstand his German expressions, was again exposed to constant disadvantage. At last, however, it reached Weber's ears that his enemy was, to all appearance, pushing on the production of "Euryanthe" with the greatest zeal. But he knew the character of Spontini, and the position of affairs at Berlin, too well not to be put upon his guard at once by this suspicious eagerness. He quickly discovered the intrigue by which his rival was planning to work his ruin; and, spite all his desire to see his opera given in Berlin,

he took the initiative of writing to demand that his score should be returned to him, until the company should be again in a position to produce it under more favourable circumstances, in the autumn. Count Brühl was himself glad to seize upon this opportunity to arrive at an issue which removed a great weight from his mind, and enabled him to extricate himself from the embarrassments in which, by his own indiscretion, he had involved himself. Prince Wittgenstein consented to the proposed delay, with the hope that "on a future occasion no more lamentable passions or personal discussions would be allowed to come into play;" and Weber's score was returned to him. Count Brühl, however, was unwilling to remain the butt of the various reports current in Berlin, where Weber was so highly cherished as a composer and honoured as a man, and resolved, for his own justification, to publish a true account of the whole proceedings relative to the performance of "Euryanthe." Perhaps the step was not the wisest. At all events, it was thwarted by an imperative ministerial order, which commanded the Count to let the matter rest. Weber, however, published in the *Abendzeitung* a detailed notice of his reasons for withdrawing his opera for the present, in which he had the discretion and generosity not to implicate Spontini more than was necessary.

The agitation which Weber had undergone during the harassing discussions and uncertainties of this lamentable affair, and his deplorable anger, had left the most cruel traces on his state of health. The symptoms of his fatal disease, which all his friends

had remarked with the liveliest apprehension ever since his return from Vienna, assumed a more threatening character than ever. His respiration became more difficult, his cough more distressing; continual cold sweats wore him to a shadow. His customary walks became too fatiguing, and were obliged to be relinquished. The advent of any letter caused him to tremble so painfully, that on every arrival of the post his poor anxious wife was obliged to be ready at hand with a sedative draught.

In this state any artistic production on Weber's part was out of the question; but he found strength, not only to occupy himself zealously and conscientiously with his official duties, but to undertake other labours in which his kindly feelings found an interest. Much as the Italian school, especially when followed by German composers, was uncongenial to him, he bestowed a truly fostering care upon the "Didone abbandonata" of Reissiger, a young composer then just rising into notice, whom destiny had marked as his own successor, although no favourable result was achieved for the object of his warm interest. His old feelings of deep attachment had been awakened also in favour of the lost friend Mayerbeer's "Margaret of Anjou," which he had the pleasure to see received with acclamation, at all events by the exclusive "Italianissimi" of Dresden. But, spite his pleasure in his quondam friend's success, Weber could not but lament to private ears the error, as he himself conceived it, in the young composer's obvious tendencies at that period. "Mayerbeer," he wrote to Gottfried

Weber, "is losing himself more and more, alas, in that miserable Italian slough. What a beautiful blossom has been withered there! What hopes are lost! Oh, that accursed thirst to please—only to please! They say he is going to return to Germany in April. I don't believe it. He would be ashamed to look us in the face." Nor were the sinking capellmeister's official labours mitigated during all the painful time of his distresses respecting the affair with Spontini at Berlin. Upon the death of church-composer Schubert, he had hoped that the heavy burden which had fallen on his shoulders during that artist's illness and Morlacchi's absences would be lightened to him. The hope was vain. Old Vicenzo Rastelli, who had been already pensioned off, was reinstalled in the office of church-composer; and the whole organisation of duties remained as it had previously been. Morlacchi, although constantly absent upon leave, had used his influence once more to this intent, as if only to thwart the views and wishes of his rival capellmeister; and the poor suffering Weber, who seemed now scarcely to have a breath of life left in his body, was, during the whole long hot summer, taxed even more cruelly than ever by all the heavy duties of a service which in reality was not his own. His chief pleasure now lay in the gratification of his passion for equipages and horses; and in this, it may certainly be said, he found the means of breathing the fresh air, and vivifying, in some degree, his ever-weakening frame.

Beyond his strictly operatic duties, there were several matters, meanwhile, which were sadly taxing

the poor invalid's strength, mentally as well as bodily. Among others was the preparation of a "Stabat Mater," composed by the Princess Amalie, which Weber judged most favourably. It was given in the royal apartments: and during the summer months the grateful and amiable Princess unconsciously still further increased the wearied man's labours by employing him as a teacher in the science of composition. Naumann's beautiful oratorio, "I Pellegrini," had to be studied and rehearsed also for the Catholic church: and far severer still was the task of preparing Haydn's "Seasons," a work which Weber regarded with especial love and reverence, for a great concert, given in the cause of charity. "We gave it yesterday in the Opera-house," he wrote to Lichtenstein on the 7th June. "What freshness, youthful glow, and yet deep study, there are in this sublime masterwork! It went admirably. . . . These are the moments which repay my soul for the weary load of labours, almost beyond mortal power, which lies so heavy upon me!"

Faint hopes of recovery still lay, however, in the peace and quiet of Weber's darling Hosterwitz, for which he always yearned. He dreamed that he could best fight the battle for life there. "I would I were a woodcutter!" he sighed, when he once found himself in the still glades by the river's side; "I could have my proper holidays and Sundays then; and I should escape that devouring demon of art and fame." Here he would lie in the grass and play with his little boy, his dog, his cat, and his ape, and let the warm sun shine upon him for hours long; or wander

slowly through meadow, and vale, and shady lane with his wife, who was again expecting to become a mother. To all inquiries he answered, "What am I doing? I laugh and I laze—that's all!" He could still laugh, then. He could still jest. He could still be a child. The great composer of "Der Freischütz" and "Euryanthe" could still find joy in fabricating a "go-cart," in which his dog was taught to drag little Max, and cat, and ape, and shout with delight when his harness was complete, and all trotted off together. Innate joyousness and geniality still did battle with the fatal enemy within, and still sometimes won the victory over pain and suffering.

Had it been always so! But fresh labours were still before him to undermine the tottering fabric. A celebration of the hundredth anniversary of Klopstock's birthday was to take place at Quedlinburg, on the 2d July 1824; and Weber had been earnestly entreated by the authorities of the town to take the direction of the musical festivities of the occasion upon himself. Weak and weary, and unwilling to quit his country life as Weber was, he could not resist his own desire to do honour to the great German bard. Every consideration was made subservient to this longing; and he consented, upon the condition that he should arrange the programme of the music according to his own views. So to Quedlinburg he travelled on the 27th June, accompanied by Madame Funk, who was to sing the solos, and the flute-player Fürstenau. Everywhere was the illustrious composer received with honour, reverence,

and affection. His companions could but open their eyes with wonder. Such testimony of admiration was not paid to him at Dresden; and they were far from knowing on how high a pinnacle the world had already placed the modest little man, whom they were accustomed to consider at home as "nothing so very particular." On their return, Weber's companions could never tire of expatiating on this great marvel.

All available forces had been assembled at Quedlinburg to do honour to the great occasion. Weber expended his poor strength, as if he were still in his lustiest days, in bringing all those forces into order. His zeal was unremitting. On the previous day, Beethoven's "Symphonia Eroïca," Weber's "Jubilee Overture," Mozart's "Hymn to the Maker," and other smaller works were given. On the great festive day, Naumann's "Vater Unser," Schneider's beautiful cantata, "Den Fürsten unseres Lebens," and the third part of Handel's "Messiah" were produced. Madame Funk sang the wonderful air, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," with unusual power and fervour. Of this air Weber had been accustomed to speak as an emanation of the greatest artistic inspiration, combining the most masterly scientific treatment with the noblest expression of Christian joy and love. Weber was deeply moved. No man had a greater horror than himself of any expression of strong emotion before the face of men. But his whole nervous system had been shattered and overstrained by wearing illness. He struggled long and stoutly with the overpowering feelings, combined of

religious reverence and artistic enthusiasm, which seized on him. He struggled in vain. All on a sudden he let fall his baton, buried his face between his hands on his desk, and burst into a flood of tears. There was a movement in the orchestra. It was thought he had been taken ill. But Weber mastered himself, raised his head, and elevated his baton once more. It was long, however, before he could recover himself from the effect of this emotion. On the next day, when, among other pieces, Beethoven's "Overture to Coriolanus" was given, he was so ill, that he refused to play himself. He felt that his power was leaving him. Every body, however, entertained the deep conviction how much was owing to the wondrous faculty with which the gifted man had breathed the breath of life and true art into the masses, consisting chiefly of dilettanti, out of whom he had had to create a great musical entirety. The enthusiasm for Weber was uproarious; and the poor weak man, thus overwhelmed with honour, affection, and respect, sat with sunken head, and yearned for home, and peace, and rest of mind and body. He could not be persuaded to remain to receive all the honours which men would eagerly have heaped upon him. He was again at home. But not for long. Mistaken science would persist in sending him to Marienbad; and pitilessly was he sent there by his medical advisers. Rest and utter inactivity did for him more than the waters, which could only have been prejudicial to him. If he returned uncured, he returned at least with somewhat greater strength.

But Weber had now a cruel task before him. The conviction of his increasing weakness rendered it imperative upon him to diminish all his labours not immediately connected with his official duties. The most painful portion of this necessity was the renunciation of all further instruction to his much-cherished pupil, Julius Benedict. He loved the young man as a father; but he felt himself obliged to turn a deaf ear to all the entreaties of the future celebrated composer to be allowed to remain with him still. He addressed young Benedict a letter of farewell, which reads, indeed, like a father's blessing, and does as much honour to Weber's heart as his head.* As a second father, he warned the youth against all his little errors. "You know," he wrote, "how I despise all that so-called geniality, which, in the life of an artist, is looked upon as a passport to reckless conduct, and an abnegation of morality. Without a doubt, it fosters fancy; and I know how hard it is not to carry into real life all an artist's brilliant

* On the previous day Weber had addressed a letter, of which the following is an extract, to the future composer's father: "If God grants Julius the perseverance and modest humbleness of the true artist, who pursues his art for art's sake only, added to his eminent gifts and talent, he cannot fail to achieve considerable success in the world; provided he does not endeavour to sow and reap at the same time, and to snatch in a few months what for others is the labour of many years. For myself, I can at least solemnly assert and know, that I have neither neglected, kept back, nor overlooked any thing which, according to my belief, could make him a thorough artist and man. I could read to him from the book of experience, and have done so with affection, strictness, at times even with words of deep earnestness. I pray God may vouchsafe His best blessing on his exertions."

dreams, how pleasant to 'let oneself go.' But self-mastery is indispensable to distinguish between freedom in the appointed circle, and the mere false idolatry of a vain idol. Unremitting industry is the only magic wand which can exorcise the craving demon. It is the greatest madness to believe that serious study cripples the artist spirit. . . . My dear Julius, you have too much good sense, too much talent, too much ambition, I trust, to sin against God, your parents, art, yourself, and me, by giving yourself to the intoxication of your youthful dreams, and to ignore the great lesson, that firm perseverance and strict order can alone guide to a true end any honourable soul, that would live in the world and for the world. . . . In parting from you, I trust to Him, who can lead in the right path. In every life there is a turning-point, which decides the future. Let it not be the wrong one with you. Art demands abnegation. Make it a point of honour to be firm and independent; and your own conscience will compensate and reward you for every self-sacrifice. My heart goes with you on your path of life. Prove to me that all my fears are vain; and, one day, you will hold forth your hand to me from a proud eminence. May Heaven's best blessing rest on you, is the sincerest wish of your master and true friend." To this admirable letter was subjoined a testimonial: "Julius Benedict, of Stuttgart, has studied the art of composition with me; and his eminent talent permits me to hope that he may become a distinguished artist. C. M. VON WEBER. *Dresden, 23d July* 1824."

During all this period Weber's creative genius slept, as has been already stated. Since the production of "Euryanthe," not a melody had been awakened in his soul—not a scrap of song had been noted down. His inactivity became so precious to him, his antipathy to work so great, that he shrunk from the consciousness of this state of mind with a sort of terror. "I have not the slightest yearning for piano or music-paper," he wrote to Caroline, when at Marienbad. "I feel as if I must have been a tailor, and no composer, all my life. . . . I never could have believed that I could ever feel this disgust for work. But oh! if it should always continue so!" "Shall I ever again find a single thought within me?" he wrote again. "Now there is nothing—nothing. I feel as if I had never composed a note in my life, and that the operas could never have been really mine."

Other grievous symptoms came upon Weber now. He became a prey to distressing presentiments, for which he could not, and, in some respects, would not account. The feeling was more than ever deeply rooted in him, that the end of his earthly existence was at hand. One chief thought seemed to possess him—namely, that out of his failing powers he must endeavour to dig up, as from a nearly exhausted mine, every possible material advantage for the dear ones who depended upon him for all. His desire for gain assumed a form which was unknown to him even during the most painful struggles of his life. It was evinced by a feverish impatience in all his pecuniary

affairs, and by a determination to grasp the lesser advantage of the moment rather than the greater profit of the future. But surely the fast-sinking man may be well pardoned, in the last days of his brief existence, a greed which so many great artists have exercised all their lives, when inspired by the longing to see his family beyond the reach of care and want, before he laid his own head to rest. Thus it was, that on Weber's return from Marienbad, in the beginning of August, he entered upon the last great phase of his life.

Pressure from without came to rouse Weber forcibly from his apathy. As early as the month of June, offers and invitations had reached him from the operatic managements in Paris, to write operas for the French capital, and come there to conduct them himself. Weber hesitated; he could not shake off his antipathy to work. But on his arrival in Dresden from Marienbad, he found a letter awaiting him from Charles Kemble, then lessee of Covent Garden Theatre in London, requesting Weber to write a new opera for his theatre, and conduct himself representations of "Der Freischütz" and "Preciosa," the first of which, although only given in a very mangled state, had achieved an immense success in England. Here then were, on both sides, brilliant prospects, promising rich harvests in fame and increase of fortune. The choice was difficult; and the composer's indecision cost him many a weary day of painful thought, and many a sleepless night. The advantages were nicely balanced. Friends stepped in, who

did all they could to throw the weight into the scale of the Covent-Garden offer, or at least to give it the precedence. After a period of harassing doubt, Weber listened to their advice. To this determination he was urged, at the same time, by the sympathy he had always felt for England, as well as for the illustrious family of which Charles Kemble appeared before him as the representative. The proposition from London was accepted. In the middle of September a delighted answer came from Kemble, offering him the choice of his own subject, but begging him, at the same time, to select a thoroughly German one, and suggesting either "Faust" or "Oberon." Weber eagerly seized upon the idea of the latter. The subject was so completely congenial to the very essence of his genius. He entreated that the book might be transmitted to him with the least possible delay.

With his usual conscientiousness, Weber besought from the manager every possible information respecting the singers likely to be engaged, the compass of their voices, and their style, the parts in which they had hitherto most pleased the public, and those which they themselves preferred, their personal appearance, their histrionic talent—in short all that could be asked or told by letter. In this respect his wishes were gratified to the utmost. His arrangement of monetary affairs was unfortunately far less satisfactory. Led away by his impatience to conclude the affair at once, he stipulated for no certain remuneration. Instead of making such demands as his fame well warranted,

he only proposed dubious terms, and left the matter to the nobleness of mind of the contracting manager. He insisted, at the same time, on conditions then strange and unusual,—such as an equipage during his stay in London, and a dwelling at the cost of the management,—and thus failed in the most essential point necessary for obtaining the great end and aim for which he was about to sacrifice the last spark of life within him. The modest and uncertain conduct of the German composer could but have an unfavourable effect on the mind of any Englishman who had witnessed the enormous pretensions at that time raised by Weber's rival Rossini, as composer and conductor in London. Rossini, without writing one note for England, had demanded and obtained the sum of 2500*l.* for conducting three of his own operas, together with the services of his wife. For every co-operation in any concert in high musical circles he had received the sum of 50*l.*; and when he had left London, discontented with his gains, and grumbling scornfully at the niggardliness of the English nation, his admirers, in very shame, had got up two concerts for his benefit, which obtained for him a clear profit of 1600*l.* more. Rossini had appeared like a prince, with glittering equipage and powdered lacqueys; and like a prince he had been received: and very detrimental to Weber were necessarily the quiet mien and modest dealings of the less arrogant German master.

The first result of this contrast appeared in the offer of 500*l.* made by Charles Kemble for the com-

position of "Oberon," besides the composer's personal expenses. But this sum was so far below Weber's modest expectations, that he at once declined the proposal: in turn he was requested to leave the matter of pecuniary remuneration for the present in abeyance, until the manager should be able to have a personal interview with him in Germany. Weber still trusted to English generosity, in which he had the firmest faith; and, in the hope of finding sources of gain in wealthy London beyond his opera, he commenced the preliminary preparations for his composition. So great was Weber's conscientiousness that he now, when nearly forty years of age, and struggling with a fatal malady, began to study the English language with zeal and ardour. He was no Italian to bring his "cara mia," "sorte amara," and "padre duro" with him for subsequent retranslation. It was his duty, he conceived, to compose for the English people in their own spirit, and with a competent knowledge of their tongue.

Still, however, he was left in the most harassing doubt as to the result of his negotiation. In his correspondence with friends, towards the end of the year, he complained bitterly of hearing not a word from England since the beginning of October. At last, on the 30th December, arrived the first act of "Oberon," written by the well-known English dramatic author Planché. But Weber's health, meanwhile, had suffered cruelly from all his uncertainties; and much was around him to overcloud his horizon during the autumn and winter of 1824.

Von Könneritz, the general director of the theatre, a man of refined and friendly manners, and of clear good sense, who, if no especial friend to Weber, was never at least antagonistic to him, and who had learned to know the business of his office, was removed to the embassy at Madrid. His place was supplied by Herr von Lüttichau; a handsome man of pleasure, well looked upon at court, and a favourite and implicit follower of Count Einsiedel. Herr von Lüttichau knew no more of the stage than any other noble courtier who had been accustomed to look upon it as a mere spectator. Practical in some degree, but without æsthetical or logical cultivation, the new general director seemed to rely on his imposing appearance, and his utter recklessness, to triumph over the difficulties of his position, which to a man of finer feeling might have appeared almost insurmountable. As a disciple of Count Einsiedel, and a follower of all his views, Herr von Lüttichau could not be otherwise than inimical to Weber; and as a true adept in the school of aristocratic indifference for personal merit and good service, he only judged his subordinates by the light of his own capricious grace and favour. Towards those who were antipathetical to him, he was as cold, hard, and suspicious, as he was lavish in his marks of favouritism to those whose subserviency pleased him. From the antipathy of his new chief Weber was only protected by the influence of the clever and sensible wife of Herr von Lüttichau, a woman of considerable literary acquirements and ability, who had a great respect for the unfortunate

capellmeister both as artist and as man. But, under any circumstances, Weber could not but look upon this new appointment as a misfortune for himself and for his endeavours in the right direction, and an evil omen for the establishment in which he served. With this impression Weber made every effort to obtain the appointment of his friend Wolff to the chief direction of the stage-management, as a mitigating influence. He wrote to Wolff an anxious and almost heart-rending entreaty to accept this appointment; and when his supplication could not be met in the affirmative, he bowed his head in sorrow, and felt himself utterly alone and deserted.

Another circumstance weighed heavily also upon Weber's mind. He could not but own to himself that the prepossession of the Dresden public in favour of Italian opera was increasing rather than diminishing. Morlacchi's admirable acquisition of Signora Pallazesi and Buonfigli had worked its fascinating spell. These artists had enraptured the public in Rossini's "Zelmira." In fact, the whole Italian company was now far more excellent than any as yet heard in the Saxon capital; it was second only to Barbaja's celebrated Vienna troop. Spohr's "Jessonda," wonderfully sung by Madame Schröder Devrient, had left the public cold and indifferent. These were evil signs in the eyes of the man, whose zeal in the cause of German art had been the one great motive principle of his life. A despair in the ultimate success of the "good cause" fell upon him with a blighting influence.

Weber was struck to the heart, moreover, by the accounts which reached him on all sides, of the shameful and tasteless arrangement of his "Der Freischütz" for the Parisian stage, by Castil Blaze, not only to the infinite detriment of his own good fame in France, as well as to his rightful pecuniary interests, but to the destruction of his hopes of producing it in its proper shape, under his own direction.* Vexations and annoyances of every kind thus

* Castil Blaze, an author and musician of some celebrity, had conceived the notion that he was destined to reform the condition of the lyrical stage in France. To this intent he had already cooked up some of Mozart's and Rossini's operas after a fashion as absurd as worthless. When "Der Freischütz" was at the height of its popularity, he surreptitiously obtained possession of the score, employed Sauvage, the dramatic author, to write a new libretto, the scene of which was laid in Scotland, and which was called "Robin des Bois, ou les Trois Balles," and eventually produced the transmogrified opera upon the stage of the Odéon theatre in Paris, on the 7th of December 1824. The piece was eminently successful; although, on the first representation, the Wolf's-glen scenes were hooted and hissed. M. Castil Blaze was not ashamed to take all remuneration derivable from the representations for himself and M. Sauvage, as though they had been the veritable composer and author; and in this pretension the management of the theatre quietly acquiesced, although it was known to all that Weber lived and had a just claim to his rights. So pleased appears M. Castil Blaze to have been by the advantages he had already reaped to Weber's detriment, that (thinking a full score too expensive probably) he obtained a piano score of "Euryanthe," concocted a fresh instrumentation, according to his own caprice and fancy, and had the subject again rewritten, with spoken dialogue, and the omission of the recitatives. Accustomed as Weber was to see his own harvests reaped by others, he could not succumb to such an injury. He wrote to the management of the Odéon. His letters remained unheeded. The "Euryanthe," nevertheless, was given as proposed. The "Preciosa" was so execrably performed, that it was hissed from one end to the other.

crowded upon the suffering man towards the close of the year 1824. His anxious and loving Caroline, about to become again a mother, was unable to find the necessary spirit and strength to cheer and animate, as was her pleasant and affectionate wont. Weber himself made an effort to rally. In his sinking soul he tried to find still the fresh fountain of former joyousness. At a masquerade, given by Count Kalkreuth, he appeared in a strange attire, covered all over with noses, causing laughter by his mysterious whisperings that he had the well-known "nose-disease, which was awfully catching," so that no one ought to come near him. But his real source of merriment was dried up then. The death-shaft had struck, and was not to be removed.

CHAPTER XI.

OBERON.

It was one of Weber's fondest wishes to possess a daughter, whom he could look upon, in his paternal dreams, as the ornament of his old age, and a loving companion to his wife. This hope did much to banish the dark cloud which rested on him. Already he fancied this treasure to his household folded in his arms. But on the 6th of January 1825, the birth of another sturdy boy was announced to him. Half delighted, half disappointed, he cried aloud, "Heaven be praised! But, oh dear! it is only a double!"

The year, moreover, commenced with an event which Weber looked upon as a sad defeat for his beloved German opera. The "Tebaldo ed Isolina" of Morlacchi, in reality a charming work, or, at all events, the composer's best, in which a flow of Rossini-ish Italian melody had been combined with a sort of German spirit and feeling, to the full satisfaction of both the contending parties, was received triumphantly by the Dresden public; whereas the "Faniska" of Cherubini, which was in truth rather a

symphony with song, than a dramatic lyrical work, succumbed before its brilliant rival. Weber considered all the toil and energy of his past years, for the musical cultivation of his public, to be now lost. With this feeling of utter despair heavy upon him, he refused, almost rudely, an offer from Count Brühl to him, to compose the witches' music to "Macbeth," a new translation of which, by Spiker, was about to be produced upon the Berlin stage. The state of mind superinduced by all the vexations around him, in conjunction with his sufferings, and the condition of his slowly-recovering wife, became distressing. His friend Lichtenstein wrote to implore him to throw himself once more into the arena of art with courage and energy. "You are right, dear brother," he wrote in reply; "with proper self-excitement a man may always do something which is worth the effort; but for that effort he must be his own master. How is he to overcome the thousand little trumpery annoyances which bondage brings in its train?"

Meanwhile, Weber was in correspondence with Planché, from whose hands he had received, by the 18th of January, the second and third acts of "Oberon."* From this moment constant entries of

* Weber must at this period have made a great proficiency in the English language. His letters are said to have been revised by his English master; but the completely foreign turn of some portions of his English correspondence and the strange phraseology scarcely admit of this supposition. His letters to Planché were textually as follows:

"SIR,—I am most obliged to you for all the kind things you are pleased to honour me with. I can only congratulate myself

the composer's first ideas for various portions of the work may be found in his daily note-book. From this rapidity of conception, and exuberance of ideas, it would almost seem as if, during the fifteen months Weber's genius had lain fallow, it had been garner-

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to share in toils of an author who displays so much feeling and genius in his fluent verses. The cut of an English opera is certainly very different from a German one—the English is more a drama with songs. But in the first act of 'Oberon' there is nothing that I could wish to see changed, except the finale. The chorus is conducted to its place, I think, rather forcibly, and cannot excite the interesse of the public, which is linked to the sentiment of Rezia. I would consequently wish for some more verses —full of the greatest joy and hope—for Rezia, which I might unite with the chorus, and treat the latter as subordinate to Rezia's sentiments. Pardon my making use of your condescending permission.

"I thank you obligingly for your goodness of having translated the verses in French; but it was not so necessary, because I am, though yet a weak, however a diligent, student of the English language. I am with esteem, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"C. M. B. DE WEBER.

"Dresden, the 6th January 1825.

"P.S. Being ignorant if the rest of your opera has been sent already, before the arrival of those letter, I cannot but repeating you that it is vastly (interesting) to get the sight of the whole as soon as possible."

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have received the second act of 'Oberon,' the 18th January; and the third act, and your very amiable letter, in one and the same day, the 1st February.

"These two acts are also filled with the greatest beauties. I embrace the whole in love, and will endeavour not to remain behind you. To this acknowledgment of your work you can give credit the more, as I must repeat that the cut of the whole is very foreign to all my ideas and maxims. The intermixing of so many principal actors who do not sing, the omission of the music in the most important moments—all these things deprive our 'Oberon' the title of an opera, and will make him unfit for all other

ing up the richest stores unconsciously to himself. The idea of Huon's brilliant chivalrous air, of the first fairy chorus of the elves, of Oberon's air, so bold in harmonies, and of the great chorus, "Hail to the Caliph," besides minor and less-defined sketches, were showered down upon the paper. After these first ebullitions of fancy, however, a pause of half-a-year ensued before another note was written. But, during this period, there can be no doubt that im-

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theatres in Europe; which is a very bad thing for me, but—*passons la dessus.*

"You have so well construed my first prayers, that I continue proposals in confidence to your kindness.

"The scene between Sperasmin and Fatima, in the second act; and the (very pretty) *arietta* of the latter, must necessarily be omitted, and the quartetto follow immediately. Also the *chorus* of the pirates. But the time which we gain thereby we must spare for a *duetto* between Huon and Rezia. The absence of this piece of music would be very much regretted, and the scene upon the desert shore seems the most convenient place for it; though my musical heart sighs that the first moment when the loving pair find each other passes without music; but the opera appears too long already.

"Now wish I yet a *mad aria* for Sperasmin (when he discovers the horn) in which Fatima's lamentations unite, and close the scene with a beautiful contrast. Oh, dear sir, what would not we produce, if we were living in the same town!

"Still I beg leave to observe, that the composer looks more for the expression of feelings than the figurative; the former he may repeat and develop in all their graduations; but verses like

'Like the spot the tulip weareth
Deep within its dewy urn;'

or in Huon's song,

'Like hopes that deceive us,
Or false friends who leave us,
Soon as descendeth prosperity's sun,'

must be said only *once.*

pressions were being caught up by Weber's genius and allowed to ferment in his brain, as had always been his wont by his compositions; for when he again resumed his pen, in the month of September, the production advanced with wonderful celerity.

With the composition of "Oberon" Weber's talent entered on its last progressive stage—a stage which was never destined to reach its full development. This very opera, for instance, even when

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"You see that I speak to you as to an old acquaintance, and I hope, at least, that your will consider it so.

"Mr. Kemble has not honoured me till now with an answer to my letter of the 6th January. I conclude from this that he is convinced of the necessity to retard the opera, and that, consequently, have time to regulate our affairs. The same reason has also withheld me from replying to his letter of the 14th January, which has crossed mine of the 6th January. Yet I must own the wish to see the affair decided at last, because all sort of uncertainty puzzles me, and disturbs me in working.

"To speak sincerely, I do not understand why my honoured friend Mr. Kemble hesitates to name the sum which he can offer me. He knows what length he can go, to the credit of his country and establishment. I can demand; but I would neither appear indiscreet nor suffer injury, the latter of which I have too frequently experienced. Russia, Sweden, Poland, France, Scotland, and England have brought on the boards my performances without their being entitled to it, for my works have not been printed; and though I do not value money, to take notice of it, the world forces me at last.

"Pardon, dear sir, that I am molesting you with things you cannot be interested in; but poets and composers live together in a sort of angels'-marriage, which demands reciprocal trust. And now it is truly time to end my very checkered epistle.—I am, with the greatest esteem and regard, your most obedient servant,

"C. M. VON WEBER.

"Dresden, February the 19th, 1825."

ready for representation in England, had never, in Weber's eyes, received that completion which he considered necessary for its production on the German stage. There can be no doubt, from every reliable information, as well as from his own written notices, that the composer had always had the intention of giving another form to many portions of his work for the more subtle musical and dramatic feeling of the German public at that period, and moreover, as was well known to his wife, to convert the dialogue into recitative. The work was undertaken upon conditions fundamentally different from those which had presided over the production of his other great operas. In that of "Der Freischütz" and "Euryanthe" he had been, comparatively speaking, strong in life's quickening pulses, rich in hope, more anxious for name and fame than pecuniary recompense, ready to squander time and strength on his darling creations. Not so with "Oberon." Now the composer could not but feel that his laborious course was nearly run. He had to weigh in his mind the sum of strength still left to him, and calculate how far that little sum would go. Turn what deaf ear he would to outward influences, he heard for ever in his trembling heart three sweet beloved voices crying to him for help in that time, so near at hand, when he should be there no more to give it. Name and fame were not all to him now. Those material advantages, which might make the earthly parting less bitter to those who should remain to sorrow behind, were to be clutched with greedy hand, wherever it

was possible, by the avarice of love. At any price his opera was to be composed, produced, and blessed with "gold in store."

The present circumstances compelled Weber, moreover, to sacrifice many principles to which he had hitherto held firmly. He was eminently practical in all his ideas; and though he cannot exactly be said to have composed his works for any particular audience, or any especial artists, yet, in the musical form he gave to his inspirations, he always bore in mind the character and requirements of an ideal public, the tastes and tendencies of which were known to him. His acquaintance with the English public, and the operatic resources of the English stage, was derived only from books, letters, or personal information, often of the most erroneous kind, which on the one hand misled him, on the other rendered his hand unsteady in the picture he had to paint, and clipped the free wings of his genius. The English public of his imagination had been described to him as craving after strong effects, yet slow in artistic appreciation; clinging to stereotyped old forms, and yet eager for powerful excitements in novelty. The ballad-opera, with animated choruses, few airs, and still fewer concerted pieces, was, as he was told, the musical dramatic form of its predilection; whilst, at the same time, it required a full development of the power of bravura-singing in its artists, splendid scenery, machinery, and dresses, and perpetual change in the action of the drama. At all events, with this idea of an English public, Weber could comfort him-

self with the conviction that his great principle of the union of all the sister arts in operatic representation would find full satisfaction. It was perhaps the feeling, that this principle would be best developed in such a subject, which had led him to the choice of "Oberon." His peculiar talent revelled in the rich domain of fairy romance. Nor was he sorry to find that the English author had combined with the German fairies and demons of Wieland's poem the more material forms of the spirits of the "Tempest" and the "Midsummer-Night's Dream." He saw in them the opportunities for effects at once powerful and sweet. But the dramatic development of the work, in which he was to find all these desirable elements, was far from being wholly so congenial to him.

Wieland's "Oberon" is an admirable narrative poem, owing a great portion of its excellence to its form as an epic. It was the natural result of this very embodiment of the subject, that it was almost impossible to bestow upon the story the form of a drama. Its nature was antipathetical to all the requirements of a well-constructed dramatic piece of logical and concentrated interest. It was no wonder, then, that the opera-book should have taken the form rather of a dramatic narrative in action than of a lyrical drama, in the proper sense of the name. Its whole dramatic construction, consequently, was not one of events and actions, logically consecutive, and developing the characters of the personages engaged, but was put together by the caprice of the author, with the magic wand of Oberon as his principal instrument, in

a series of detached and almost incongruous scenes. The characters could thus never act themselves; they necessarily became mere puppets, the strings of which are all too clearly seen, without distinct life or individuality: their doings could command but little interest; their fate create no sympathy. Not one, indeed, with the exception of Fatima perhaps, goes to the hearts of the audience. Oberon himself loses the character of the amiable and benevolent fairy of Wieland's poem, who takes more to heart the fate of the loving pair than his own matrimonial happiness: he becomes a mere "tricksy spirit," who never seems rightly to know how best to exercise his own power, and showers down weal or woe, as chance may be, upon the objects of his interest, without any clearly-defined motive. In spite of all the charm put into his music, Weber, consequently, seems always to have been in doubt how to treat his individuality, and has produced a musical being far more material than was consistent with the character of a *Deus ex machinâ*, on whose lily-wand hung together all the scattered threads of the drama. It was with a consciousness of this result that the composer came to the resolution of writing the whole part an octave higher, and giving it to a female singer, for the sake of bestowing on it more brilliancy and animation when occasion should offer. Puck appeared to him more interesting, inasmuch as he was more elfish in his nature. But the part, little as is the music written for it, was one which required a graceful and intelligent pantomime actress, as well as an experienced singer; and it was thus

scarcely possible to be in every respect efficiently represented.

The musically important personages of Huon and Rezia, moreover, have inevitably become mortal souls without characteristic colouring, the mere "he" and "she," or "knight" and "lady" of the old romantic drama. Huon, with Oberon always at his back, is never called upon to act like a hero, although his music is full of the most brilliant chivalry. Never indeed has music painted in such small compass, and with such wonderful descriptive power, both in melody and instrumentation, all the feelings of the traditional world of chivalry, as in the splendid air, "Von Jugend auf."* Rezia's individuality is by far the weakest of all in character, in a dramatic point of view. Her great efforts are concentrated on her brilliant bravura air, so full of all the breath of love, "Haste, gallant knight," in the first act, and (still more strikingly) in her magnificent scena upon the sea-shore. But even here the forlorn and despairing woman is occupied almost entirely with poetical descriptions of the storm at sea, and the rise of the sun —which sinks, by the way, a very few minutes afterwards—rather than with the true feelings of her situation. But thoroughly undramatic as was this development of a great scene, Weber, at least, found occasion in it to create one of his sublimest pictures of the great effects of nature, and to give the representative of the part an opportunity never surpassed

* A new air, with fresh words, was written to meet the requirements of the singer in England,

in the range of musical execution, of developing all her powers as a lyrical artist.

As has been before intimated, the one charming character which shines out in the dramatic poem—although that true-hearted and genial fellow, Sperasmin, has also many exquisite qualities—is that of Fatima. It was with especial love, and a sense of humour, springing from his inmost heart, that Weber employed himself on this creation. Those who knew his idiosyncrasy intimately cannot doubt one moment but that he was inspired, in his musical development of this part, by the sweet memories of his own days of youth and love, when Caroline's grace and charm of manner so tuned his heart in parts of a similar description. There is a perfume of oriental roses in her songs. Her "Lonely Arab maid," and "Araby, dear Araby," like the mirage of a desert, conjure up oriental pictures of caravans and pilgrims and bright tents. The duett of Fatima with her stout-hearted companion, "On the banks of sweet Garonne," in which the good-tempered tones of the Gascon are so happily wedded to the fascinating pleasantry of the daughter of Bagdad, touches the heart as much as it promotes the most joyous laughter. It is the natural gleam of sun amidst the artificial stage-lights of the opera. The mingling of these two individualities also in the quartett, "Over the dark-blue waters," has contributed doubtless, in no small degree, to the inspiration producing that characteristic work of genius, in which the world's pomp, the love of home, blue heavens, and joy and love, are all so wonderfully

mirrored forth, and stamp the piece as the gem of the whole opera, unsurpassed in any other of his works.

The very desultory nature of the book demanded a perfectly different treatment of the choruses to that hitherto observed by Weber. The mortal feelings, which animated the masses in his other operas, had now to give way to the voices of nature in all the four elements, to those of pleasant or ghastly spirits, or to paintings of the mysterious enchantments of fabulous far-distant lands. But in this lay the peculiar sphere of Weber's genius. He had no predecessor in the musical development of this fantastic world: it was all his own. The tones which Nature, in his feverish communion with her for nigh forty years, had whispered to his impressionable soul, were now to gush forth in his music, as though he could not see her face for the last time without revealing them to mankind in melody of her own colouring, and rhythmical effects of her own confiding. In the very first chorus of the elves, butterflies flutter around our heads, and fountains gently splash amidst the sweet breath of slumber. How Nature revels in its own power in the rising of the storm! How the stars twinkle in the heavens! And in the finale of the second act (a mere episode without any dramatic connection with the piece) how lightly fall the feet of elves and fairies on the blades of grass in the moonlight amid the soft sea-cradling of that wondrous mermaid's song! In what astonishing contrast stand the march and chorus of the first finale (founded on an original Turkish melody),

so descriptive of all the pomp, grotesque slavery, and indolence of Orientalism, above which soar Rezia's notes like the nightingale's song in the gardens of Bagdad. Look again at the luxurious oriental scene of Roshana's seductions, side by side with the chivalrous mediæval march of the Frankish Emperor! These choruses are one long variegated perspective of wealth, splendour, variety, and colouring, such as no other opera can show. Still it must be confessed that the shifting changes of the scenes, demanding all the colours of the rainbow in the painting, have given an unsteady splendour and glittering uncertainty to the choruses. These results were inevitable from the very nature of the subject of the book, and the estimate the composer had been led to form of the musical requirements of an English public. Perhaps, however, after all, this effect of rich scattered jewels pervading the work can scarcely be denominated a fault in a tale of enchantment, in which fairy forms were mingled with a fable of Eastern lands. At all events, the opera has lost nothing thereby of that sunny glow which shines upon the whole, and which fills the minds of all general hearers with dreams of pleasantness, whilst it fully satisfies those of the more cultivated.

The feverish haste that compelled Weber, with his word of honour given for a certain period on the one hand, and the fear of death before his eyes on the other, to complete his opera at any risks, led to his insertion, in the third act, of two musical pieces taken from his earlier works, and only reconstructed.

But these reminiscences are scarcely to be regretted. Both these pieces, the one being the magnificent march composed for the Henri IV. of Gehe, and the other the final chorus of his "Peter Schmoll," are as much and as characteristically in their places as if they had been expressly written for his new work.* But really regrettable is the sad fact, that his physical powers failed him before he could bestow a truly dramatic and effective conclusion on his opera. The task would certainly have demanded the exercise of all his best powers; for nothing can be less dramatic in its working than the final court presentation of Rezia by her loving knight before the great Charlemagne, who, without a word, bows his solemn head, after a fashion bordering on the grotesque.

But although the opera may bear unmistakable traces of weariness and haste, and sad marks of the spur applied to the composer's flagging genius, and may thus display Weber's peculiar mannerisms more than any other of his works, yet that great symphonic introduction to the whole—the overture, which was completed only two months before his death, soars triumphantly over the influence of the deadly faintness lying heavy on him, and the pressure of outward circumstances. This overture is inferior to none of his others in life, fire, freshness, and wealth of ideas. Combined with those of "Der Freischütz" and "Euryanthe," and his "Jubilee Overture," it

* It should be mentioned also that two melodies out of his cantata "L'Accoglienza," have been used; the one in the first finale, and the other in the ballet and chorus in the third act.

forms a magnificent constellation, each star in which shines with a different light, but yet with co-equal splendour. From first to last, the overture to "Oberon" is in the most intimate sympathy with the subject. Every picture of the drama is mirrored forth in it—the world of elves and spirits; the pomp and pride of chivalry and romance; glowing love struggling against slavery, elemental might, separation, and death; the majesty of oriental enchantment. It has been asserted that Weber went too far, in this overture, in his conglomeration of various musical intentions. The most that can be fairly said, in the way of criticism, is that he may have been somewhat led away, by his desire to be characteristic throughout, into phrases accused of triviality. But still the overture to "Oberon" will always remain a monument of strength to the fame of the dramatic romantic composer.

During the composition of the different numbers of his "Oberon," Weber had another task on hand, far different in character, but not uncongenial to him. He had been solicited by Mr. George Thompson, of Edinburgh, to compose the accompaniments to ten old Scotch songs. This was a style of work which had been undertaken by Haydn in his time. Weber had accepted. He wrote his accompaniments to German verses by various authors; and these songs are among those which have been most frequently sung by dilletanti almost up to the present day. Some passages of Weber's English correspondence with Mr. Thompson are in many ways charac-

teristic of the man. "I feel myself much flattered by your invitation to add my essays to the works of great father Haydn," he writes. "I have not profited of your permission to change some notes in the melodies, because every little declination from their original would have denaturated them."

But with all his anxiety to complete his labours, it was impossible for Weber, in addition to his multifarious duties as capellmeister, to spur on his flagging spirit to the desired speed. The much-loved Hosterwitz was now renounced as far too distant for the perpetual exertion of travelling backwards and forwards. As the spring advanced, Weber hired a pleasant garden-house in the so-called Kosel-garden, in the Neustadt suburb; and here, when he would gladly have urged on his reluctant genius, he was obliged to succumb to his weakness, and spend his time in quiet walks with his wife and child, in light gardening, bathing, pistol-shooting, and the fabrication of a toy theatre, or mimic armour for his little Max. Every labour, except that of his official service, had to be renounced—every offer of remunerative work declined. It was at this period of comparative indolence that were produced the two best portraitures of the great composer which have been handed down; the one an oil-painting by Schimon, a singer from Munich, who painted better than he sang; the other a head modelled in wax by Krüger, the engraver of the royal mint at Dresden, for the purpose of stamping a medal in his honour. In this state of prostration, Weber was obliged to decline

the offer to conduct his own "Euryanthe" at Leipsic, although he bestowed much time in preparing the tempi to Mälzel's Metronome, and in writing instructions for the representation, which almost assumed the form of a musical scientific treatise; and he was consoled by the entire success of his work, in which Sonntag sang the part of "Euryanthe," and had his heart cheered by a notice from his good friend Rochlitz, in which his pride and delight must have received the fullest satisfaction.

A joy of this kind was indeed a boon to the poor suffering man; for the uncertainty in which he had been so long left as to the business arrangements for the production of his "Oberon" in London, were perpetually adding cruelly to his feverish irritation both of mind and body. At length, on the 16th June, arrived the long-desired letter from Charles Kemble; but the remuneration proposed was still so far below Weber's expectations, that he was again obliged to decline. In his turn he made proposals, which may certainly be looked upon as exorbitant, but which were far from being so when compared with the rich store freely showered into the lap of Rossini.

"I acknowledge them with thanks," wrote Weber, in allusion to Kemble's offers; "but I take the liberty to make you other proposals, the reasons of which I do not state, because they will be surely clear enough to your discernment. At my arrival at London, I will first of all preside at the piano in six representations of the "Freischütz; for the first five you will give me every night a pecuniary com-

pensation of two hundred pounds, and the sixth as a benefit for me. During this time we will prepare 'Oberon;' and I will preside at the piano also the first six representations, at the same conditions. I must be assured that all this be settled in three months; otherwise I should claim an adequate indemnification. The music of 'Oberon' (partition, and adapted by me for the piano) is then your property for Great Britain. The poem and music are mine for the rest of Europe, &c." These demands would have amounted to the sum of 2400*l.* for the cession of his "Oberon" and his other services. The composer, who could not claim to be an Italian, was obliged at last, with the fatal "must" weighing him down, and weary of his struggles, to give all for a third of the demanded sum.

Weber had long resisted the efforts of his physicians to visit some one of the waters of Germany for his health. But at last the wearing weight of his official duties, combined with the sad shadow which was now always lying on his soul at home, urged him to seek for some alleviation of his constant melancholy and irritated humour, in a quiet journey. For the first time in his married life, he clutched at this idea with delight. He hoped to find life, and light, and freedom, and a mitigation of his sufferings, away from home. He resolved to go to Ems, visiting pleasant places on his way, with his own carriage and horses. When the time came, the "farewell" to his wife and child smote him more heavily than he expected. But in hope he departed, cheered by

the loveliest sunlight. On the Prussian frontiers, where the honour was done him to allow his luggage to pass unexamined, he was met by the pleasant news that Spontini had quitted Berlin on leave of absence, and that no further intrigues would militate against the representation of his "Euryanthe" in the Prussian capital. In Weimar he made a long halt, to pass some days in the family of his cherished and amiable friend Hummel.

Weber met with Goethe's son in Weimar; and the young man urged him strongly to pay a visit to the illustrious poet his father. Weber was unwilling: he felt that the great man had some antipathy to him; he knew that Goethe had expressed himself, under the influence of his friend Zelter, as no admirer of "a talent of the mushroom order." But Weber at last consented: and he was doomed to repent the step he had taken. The mighty monarch of literature allowed the composer to remain long in his anteroom, even sending out twice to inquire "what the man's name was." Weber, who had on his journey been sunning himself in the beams of his great fame, felt chilled to the heart by this unwonted reception. When at last admitted to the presence, he was already slightly irritated and indisposed to friendly conversation. Goethe received him standing, and waved his hand to point out a chair to his visitor, without a word. The great man asked a few questions about acquaintances at Dresden, without ever touching upon the subject of music, and shortly rose again to intimate that the audience was at an end, and that he

was not disposed to treat his visitor otherwise than as one of those curious intruders, who simply sought his presence for the pleasure of saying, "I have spoken with Goethe!" And thus was the celebrated composer dismissed. Weber felt more angry, as he himself narrated, than he could have supposed it possible. Had a prince so received him, he might have smiled. That Goethe should have thus treated him, smote him to the heart. He felt the mortification so keenly, that the symptoms of his disease burst forth afresh: and for two days he was obliged to keep his bed. Could his mortification have been soothed, it assuredly would have received the due balm from the affectionate respect which was lavished upon him during this time by all that was otherwise great and distinguished in Weimar.

In Gotha, he was again solaced by the tokens of friendship heaped upon him by his friends Varnhagen, his celebrated wife Rahel, and her brother Ludwig Robert, who were passing through upon a journey. Rahel Weber had always regarded as a phenomenon of talent and amiability combined, "the most captivating sorceress of society." The meeting with this gifted woman worked like a sunny beam from heaven upon Weber's heart, and gilded over all his dark shadows of mortification. He parted from the travelling party with the deepest regret in Frankfurt.

By the 11th July, Weber was in Wisbaden. Here too a pleasant little occurrence touched him greatly. At the table-d'hôte of his hotel he sat next a Dr. Horn, a man of great acquirements, and a passionate

lover of music. The conversation turned on literature and art. The music in the gallery brought up the subject of "Der Freischütz." Surprised at the knowledge respecting music displayed by his unknown companion, Dr. Horn ventured to ask his name. "I am not ashamed of it," replied the composer with a quiet smile: "it is Weber." "Oh, Gottfried Weber?" "No." "The Weber of Berlin?" "He is long since dead." "You don't mean to say," stammered the eager man, with quivering breath, "not—not—" he could not speak out. "Carl Maria von Weber —yes," was the reply. The astonished man was speechless for a while: then with tears springing into his eyes, he said in a soft whisper, "What a happiness has Heaven permitted me!" Weber was never indifferent to incense from the altar of fame, although he set no special store by it. "But now," he himself wrote, "I could but feel grateful to Providence for having given me the power to affect so deeply the heart of such a man: it was a rich reward."

Most of all was the incense to be burned under his nose at Ems, then the most fashionable and aristocratic bathing-place of Germany, until, as he laughingly said, it nigh suffocated him outright. The little lame modest-looking man was received with a sort of sulky indifference at the well-known hotel of the Four Towers, and shown into a poor apartment. Presently, whilst occupied in shaving before the glass, after unpacking his luggage, he was struck by an uproar in the hotel. In another moment, landlady, and waiters of every rank and description in the hier-

archy of waiterdom, rushed into his room. In a state of suffocating agitation the mistress gasped forth the words, "Had I but known! Freischütz! Preciosa! I'll turn every soul into the streets!" and rushed out again, followed by her whole bewildered troop. Next came, one after the other, a succession of inmates, offering to give up their rooms: one gentleman brought his luggage with him, already packed; and willy-nilly the great composer, more worried than pleased, was obliged to transfer his domicile to the state apartments of the hotel. At dinner in the cursaal, for a time he was left quiet, hearing the buzzing conversation relative to the possible, probable, and even actual arrival of the great composer, listening to anecdotes of himself, his personal appearance, and his adventures. Presently, the rumour spread around that he was sitting at the table. A shout of jubilee was raised—his health was drank with loud huzzas—the band struck up an air in "Der Freischütz;" and the poor worried man could only rise and slip away as best he could. Then came serenades from the bath music, from the military bands, from every one who had an instrument to play, or a voice to sing—and ever "Der Freischütz," ever "Preciosa." No wonder Weber wrote, "I could almost curse the hour I ever composed a note. There is no escape from my own confounded self!" All the bewildered celebrity could do was to decline every visit, and refuse to make a single one. But all was of no avail. As soon as he appeared on the promenade, he was surrounded by all that was great and fashionable in Ems, all that

was distinguished for talent, wit, beauty, and grace. In vain the poor man sighed for peace and quiet to sip his healing waters, and nurse his health. Now it was Prince Friedrich of Prussa who took him by storm in the bath-room, and insisted on his presence at all the merry little parties for which his exclusive circle was celebrated. No pretext of health was permitted him. Lovely women and clever men used all their wiles to persuade him he was not ill at all. He had to be dragged hither and thither by the joyous crew, and pay his scot, at games of "forfeits," by an improvisation on the piano, or a waltz with a princess. Presently the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia, who arrived in July, seized upon him as their own especial property, and enslaved him by their pleasant humour, in every way so congenial to his own, and by their genial views on art, and life, and men, and things. "Had I but health and courage!" wrote Weber to his wife on the 2d August, "I need not fear that fortune should fail me now, could I but work. Well! with God's help the power will be restored. So courage, Bajazzo, courage! ... To-day the Crown Princess gives a ball, at which I am not only expected to appear, but to dance too. It is awful to think of. Unfortunately, in addition to my other reputation, I have that of a good dancer. But I should be far happier if people would only dance to my pipe, and leave me unmolested." At this very ball, Weber extemporised a waltz so lovely, that the Princess brought him pen and paper, and begged that it might be noted down at once. Unfortunately this little gem is lost.

Spite of all the many sources of pleasure and satisfaction which flowed in upon Weber at Ems, his attacks of depressing melancholy lay heavy on his soul sometimes. He lost all confidence in the young physician in whose hands a malignant fate had placed him. Fever, weakness, cold-sweats, and sudden loss of voice fell on him more frequently than ever. His presentiments of approaching death, spite of all, were not to be shaken off; and even in the midst of the gayest society, he would sink into a dark dreamy state, from which he found it impossible to rouse himself. His old heimweh, too, again tormented him to that oppressive degree, that he was often on the point of giving up all his hopes of cure from the waters of Ems, and hurrying back to home and peace. Fortunately, the Crown Prince had brought with him his private physician, a Dr. von Stosch; and by the care of this distinguished and genial man Weber was once more blessed with confidence and hope.

All at once came a letter from Charles Kemble, announcing his speedy appearance in Ems. In two days he himself arrived, accompanied by the well-known English musician and conductor, Sir George Smart, —the noble-hearted man, to whose friendship and kindness Weber was afterwards destined to owe so much. The two travellers were only to be a few hours in Ems; and those hours were spent in hasty colloquies on the subject of the opera, and the proposed visit to England. In spite of all Weber's endeavours, however, no definite arrangement was made as to the remuneration the composer was to receive

for his services. The only conviction he could come to was, that the large sum, for which he was desirous of stipulating, was wholly out of the question; and no more had been elicited when the travellers took their leave and hurried on. Still the personal appearance of the two men, and their quiet firm, clear, and thoroughly practical British manner had re-awakened the slumbering confidence in Weber's heart. After this personal interview he came to the decided resolution of undertaking the journey to England, and abiding by all its consequences without any settled contract, and in reliance only upon the honourable feelings of men so straightforward and trustworthy in bearing. There is no doubt that he might then have obtained from Kemble, who felt the full force of the impression made by the evident high reputation of the great master in Ems, sure and settled conditions on the spot, had not his fears lest the affair in London might be wrecked by speaking boldly out, rendered him weak and vacillating, and unable to profit by the undeniable advantages in his power.

And so Weber lingered on at Ems in renewed confidence. His only great artistic performance, during his lengthy stay, was the result of the arrival of his friend Pius Alexander Wolff, who was accompanied by the admired singer Frau Milder, from Berlin. These fresh celebrities were soon also the honoured guests in the circle of the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia. At one of their pleasant parties Wolff declaimed Goethe's "Bride of Corinth;" whilst Weber accompanied him on the piano with extempore melo-

dramatic music. The mighty poem of the grave was thus given with the most masterly effect by these two great men, who were both being hurried by the irresistible hand of fate to their own early deaths. The impression made upon their audience was a solemn one, and one which was never to be forgotten. It was with tears in his eyes, and in strong emotion, that the Crown Prince pressed the hand of the weak, pale, sinking men, so insignificant in appearance, so great in fame, and thanked them with a choking voice.

But the time arrived when Weber's cure was to be considered complete. His longing for home had, by this time, assumed the form of a distracting mania. "They carry me in triumph," he wrote to Caroline: "they watch for every wink to do me kindnesses. But I feel I can be only happy there, where I can hear my lambs bleat, and their mother low, and can beat my dog, or turn away my maids, if they are all too troublesome." His sense of humour, it may thus be seen, had not wholly fled him, at times when his body was at rest from pain, and his deep deep melancholy could be shaken off. His spirit was much cheered moreover, towards the termination of his stay in Ems, by a letter from Brühl, announcing that his "Euryanthe" would be studied for the Berlin stage in October, when Spontini, with all his ceaseless intrigues, would still be absent, but all the principal singers returned, and be irrevocably fixed for representation at once. After another slow journey, in which Weber took Frankfurt by the way, and was honoured there by a special performance of his "Euryanthe,"

at the conclusion of which he was summoned, amidst flourishes of trumpets, to appear upon the stage, he found himself once more in his beloved home on the 31st of August. He let his carriage draw up at a little distance from the house, and, entering with stealthy step, surprised his wife, just employed in preparing a festive garland for his reception, by clasping her in his arms, to her mingled terror and delight.

The efforts of Count Brühl to urge on the representation of "Euryanthe" in Berlin were again not to be carried to a successful conclusion without more difficulties and rebuffs. The well-meaning, but somewhat indiscreet man had again failed to take the right road to his purpose. He, this time, presented his petition that "Euryanthe" should be purchased for Berlin to the King himself. A royal order, granting this petition, was the first intimation of this step to Prince Wittgenstein. The minister was irritated by the unwonted proceeding, and considered himself aggrieved. By what means he prevailed upon the King, who was generally so obstinate in his resolves, to revoke his given order, cannot be told. The order was rescinded, however: and this fact was announced to Count Brühl in a letter from the minister, resentful of steps taken "behind his back." The affair, now that Spontini was no longer present to aggravate the matter by his misrepresentations, might still have fallen into its natural current. But Count Brühl was now incensed; and, regardless of the minister, he addressed another direct petition to the King, soliciting the re-establishment of the first-issued order. The

King seems to have been completely wearied by the whole affair; and in another letter from Prince Wittgenstein, the Count was informed that no notice whatever would be taken of the second petition. The letter was sharp—almost insulting. But Prince Wittgenstein, in the point of view of a mere business transaction, was in the right. "It is all one to me," he wrote, "whether an opera by Spontini, Spohr, Weber, or any other composer be given. I have no prepossessions any way. But it is not so indifferent to me whether my instructions be observed or not." Count Brühl must himself have been heartily weary of all the annoyances the affair of Weber's "Euryanthe" had occasioned him; but he had the courage not to give up the cause. On the 18th August he again wrote to Weber to negotiate for the purchase of the opera, and to beg the composer to come to Berlin and direct its rehearsals personally. Weber was compelled to answer, that any leave of absence he could now obtain must necessarily be very brief; that he must trust the rehearsals in capellmeister Seidel's hands; and that he could only be present to put the last finishing strokes to the work. "But let special and precious care be given to the choruses," he wrote. "Their effect is of as much importance as that of the principals. In this opera, more than in any other, they act as an indispensable part and portion of the action."

It is almost ludicrous to see by what strange turn of fate Weber was destined, at the very time his own opera was to be rehearsed in Berlin, to under-

take the task of studying up Spontini's "Olympia" for Dresden. He himself proposed his rival's opera for the celebration of the approaching marriage of Prince Max with a Princess of Lucca. No doubt it was appropriate to the occasion, from the very fact of its great pomp and splendour. It was very evident, at the same time, that as Spontini could not fail of knowing the fact of his own opera having been proposed, and placed on the Dresden stage with the utmost care, by his enemy, he could not but be animated by a more friendly spirit than hitherto; and certainly the infinite care and zeal which Weber displayed in his efforts to produce "Olympia" with the very best effect, were as great as if his whole heart and soul were in the task. He offered, moreover, since Morlacchi was engaged upon a cantata for the same occasion, to write a recitative, to be sung by the goddess Diana in honour of the affianced pair, in order to give the opera a more direct connexion with the circumstances of its production. This recitative Weber composed with the utmost respect for the style of the maestro, and with the nearest approximation he could find to his effects. For his goodwill on this occasion Weber was honoured by the present of a handsome diamond ring from the King. The present was a royal one, as recompense for so small a matter; but much murmuring was heard among the public at the time, that no order should have been bestowed on the capellmeister. Herr von Lüttichau had pressed the propriety of this distinction eagerly. He was met only by cold refusals from Count Einsiedel.

Spite of all Weber's sincere and earnest endeavours, however; spite of all the immense expense bestowed on the scenery, dresses, processions, marches, elephants, and *tutti quanti;* spite of all the trouble, spite the pomp, such as Dresden had never witnessed, "Olympia" was coolly received by the Dresden public, and made but a brief apparition on its stage. The singers sang the music with unwillingness; and to this circumstance Weber was always generous enough to attribute the failure of his rival.

Morlacchi's cantata "La lite sopita" had even a worse fate. It was produced before the most brilliant audience. The opera-house was magnificently illuminated for the festive occasion. All at once, just as the performance began, a false alarm of fire was raised. The public scrambled in wild terror to the doors. The personal courage of the King, who sat unmoved with all the royal family in his state-box, alone saved his subjects from a great disaster. Beyond torn clothes and severe bruises, no misfortune occurred. But the panic was long ere it subsided; and but little attention was paid to Morlacchi's music. A principal air, moreover, had to be omitted. The tenor Buonfigli, who was to have appeared in the character of Apollo, had fled in terror and concealed himself: he was no more to be found that night.

Weber's spirit was so greatly roused by the hopes of the ultimate restoration of his health, which had been poured like balm upon his soul at Ems, that within a week after his return he was again actively engaged upon his opera. "Thoughts are coming

back to me!" he noted down with joy. "I have had another idea!" he wrote, as though it were a new sensation. He looked upon his mental activity as a proof of bodily convalescence, and hailed it as a source of new life. The instrumentation of the earlier portions of the opera was commenced early in September: and then piece followed upon piece in rapid succession—Rezia's fiery air, "Haste, gallant knight;" leading up, after the characteristic march of the slaves, to that wonderful burst, "Oh, my wild exulting soul;" Fatima's lovely orientally-performed song, "A lovely Arab maid;" the unequalled quartett, "Over the dark-blue waters;" Rezia's great air; the great chorus of the spirits of the elements, with Puck's introduction, "Spirits of air, and earth, and sea," so imposing and so clear in its apparently chaotic harmonies; the slavish but grand chorus, "Hail to the Caliph;" and the charming thoroughly eastern little march, which brings Rezia before the eastern monarch,—all these were written down in rapid succession. The instrumentation proceeded far more slowly than with the "Euryanthe;" and yet, for any other composer, the mass of labour which was undertaken in this respect before the end of the year 1825, might have been looked upon as enormous.

Towards the close of the year Weber had the great satisfaction of being able to add considerable weight to the endeavours, just then being made with much exertion, to authenticate the genuineness of Mozart's Requiem. Gottfried Weber had pursued his researches to this intent with great zeal, and had

solicited his friend the Saxon capellmeister to aid him by the examination of the musical manuscripts treasured up in Dresden. "I have hunted through all the archives and private collections of the King, without coming upon any manuscripts," wrote Weber to his namesake; "but I have found a splendidly-bound copy of the Requiem, printed, with Mozart's name in Latin and in German on the title-page, and a dedication to the Elector of Saxony. The German text to the Latin of the Requiem—'the music by W. A. Mozart'—is by Professor Clodius of Leipsic. After many inquiries also among the oldest members of the choir, I have come upon a written score which belonged to the deceased singer Marionetti, in which there are variations from the one printed, in the more florid arrangement of some passages, in a solo for tenor instead of the basoon solo of the other, and in some different indications of tempo, with a remark in Marionetti's hand, that he has not transcribed the Offertorium, the Sanctus, and the Agnus Dei from the copy at his disposal, because he believed them to be by another hand. Marionetti's copy has no date. . . . Thus far go my own researches. But I have been told that André of Offenbach has a sketch of the Requiem by Mozart's own hand, which he preserves as a precious relic, and hoards up in secret."

But Weber's moments of cheerfulness were destined to be shorter and shorter. In addition to his bitterness and wrath respecting the unscrupulous malappropriation of his "Euryanthe" and "Preciosa" in Paris, as already mentioned, came now further vexa-

tion and mortification. He had to learn, with anger and dismay, that his arrangement with Barham Livius, who had purchased "Abu Hassan" as well as "Der Freischütz" for Drury Lane Theatre, was of a nature to be of no protection whatever to his own interests, and that consequently all the anticipated pecuniary results from this affair were likely to be lost to him. Yet, strange to say, it was at this very period of irritating annoyance and wearying vexation that his "Oberon" was completed. All the light and life and freshness and geniality of the work gushed forth from the brain of a weak, sick, bowed-down, irritated man, who was shattered by an incessant cough, who sat at his work-table wrapped up in furs, with his swollen feet in wadded velvet boots, and yet shivered with cold in his heated room; as though the genius which created all had nothing in common with the poor suffering body.

At the beginning of December Weber received the intimation from Berlin that costumes and scenery were all ready for the representation of his "Euryanthe," and that the rehearsals were so far advanced, that nothing more could be done, except under his own immediate direction. It was to be given before Christmas. So, on the 5th December, Weber left his home once more, and was received with the utmost tenderness and affection in the house of Heinrich Beer in Berlin, the worthy head of the family being now no more.

As "Preciosa" had preceded "Der Freischütz" in the Prussian capital, so was "Abu Hassan" now des-

tined to precede "Euryanthe." This charming bright sparkling little opera of Weber's youth had been admirably given on the Berlin stage, and had obtained the liveliest approbation. Like its sister, "Abu Hassan" rose a brilliant morning-star before the coming sun.

The intellectual condition of Berlin, since Weber produced his "Der Freischütz" in 1821, had been, in many respects, considerably modified, and in a manner advantageous, rather than otherwise, to his coming work. The love of art had been considerably developed, and had become, so to say, a matter of fashion. The critical feelings of the population of Berlin, fostered by the principal professors of the academy, had received a more impressionable character, apart from national political sentiment. That thinking with the heart, and feeling with the head, which are so necessary for a true appreciation of a work of art, had become more and more the prevalent characteristic of the people. But in this respect the tendency of the public mind, and the genius of the composer, were once more sympathetic. "Euryanthe" was as far apart from the simple, wild romance of the "Freischütz," as was the tendency of the Berlin public from the mere cultivation of a national idea. It consequently found the soil as well tilled for the seed it would sow, as its predecessor had done under other circumstances. Other favourable influences were ranged at the same time on Weber's side. Spontini's great party, robbed of the generalship of its absent chief, had little power to enter on the field

of intrigue. A report, moreover, was current in public, that Prince Wittgenstein, a man to whom the people bore no love, had used all his influence to prevent the production of Weber's work, and that it had only been brought upon the stage through the courage, perseverance, and nobleness of Count Brühl, who was as much beloved as the Prince was hated. The feelings of the Berliners, always prone to opposition, were consequently roused in favour of Weber and his patron. These feelings, as may naturally be supposed, were all fostered by Weber's friends; and at the same time, the party always hostile to the composer among the old musicians was checkmated, by their chief, old Zelter, being adroitly placed at the head of certain festivities projected in Weber's honour.

Expectations were now raised to a very high pitch. It was true that reports were current relative to the different degrees of success or failure to which the opera had attained in the various cities of Germany; but in general the most favourable opinions prevailed. The Berliners looked upon Weber almost as their own child. They loved and admired him; and they were determined to do all honour to his latest work. The crowds at the box-office were "crushes." Some weeks before the first representation, every place was taken for the first five nights.

On the 8th December Weber made his first appearance at the rehearsals, which were directed by Capellmeister Seidel. A general unsteadiness, arising from the unpractical manner in which the previous

rehearsals had been conducted, at first prevailed: but Weber was determined to control his temper; and he bore his disappointment with unusual self-restraint. With the singers individually and the choruses he was pleased, however. "All are well disposed towards the opera," he wrote to Caroline; "I may say, even enthusiastic. I trust that all will go well, if there be no hurry; that is what I fear the most. Every singer has begged me to go through his or her music alone; I shall thus have to sing the whole opera by myself. This will be a sad exertion. But I will try to have all rehearsals in the evening, and thus be left free to work, if God gives me strength, in the mornings." The strength he prayed for came but at fitful intervals, however. He was visibly sinking gradually. His voice was so far gone, that he was obliged to use an interpreter to express his wishes to the orchestra. Every rehearsal left him bathed in perspiration. Fresh labours also were put upon him. Count Brühl and Höguet the dancer intreated him to compose new music for an incidental ballet; the former, out of friendship to Weber, in order that the opera might better please the ballet-loving King; the latter, in order to share in its expected triumph. Unwilling as Weber was to disturb the well-devised continuity of his work, and to give up his precious time, he complied with the request, and produced that lovely pas de cinq which has since been almost always given on all the great stages of Germany.

Weber longed to spend the Christmas-tide with his beloved ones at home. It was a season he had

always reverenced and looked upon as that of family love and tenderness. But it could not be. "I shall think of you all on Christmas-eve," he wrote. "But that I never cease to do. All my labours are for you —all my joy is with you." "Can I but be with you on New-year's eve," he wrote again, with that tinge of superstition which always more or less pervaded his character, "I shall be with you all the year." He struggled—he laboured; but this fond hope was also vain. The rehearsals of "Euryanthe" proceeded meanwhile, and fortunately, to Weber's fullest heart's content. During their progress he was surprised by the apparition of his Dresden chief, von Lüttichau, who was present at several. Nothing could exceed the astonishment and bewilderment of this gentleman on witnessing the unceasing respect and homage paid to his capellmeister, not only by men of the highest intellect, but by those of the most distinguished birth. On leaving the theatre with Weber and Lichtenstein, after the second general rehearsal, and finding crowds awaiting at the stage-door to catch a sight of the great master, and greet him with shouts of applause when he appeared, he could no longer suppress the expression of his wonder. "Is it possible?" he cried. "Then, Weber, you really are a celebrated man!"

Poor Weber! The acknowledgment came at a time when, weakened, sinking at heart, and almost unable to speak, he was compelled to withdraw himself as much as possible from all the homage of the world. So low had his nervous system fallen, that he even answered affectionate inquiries as to his

health, sometimes with irritation, sometimes with repulsive gloom. "How I am?" he answered Holtei. "Bless the man! I have got nothing but a galloping consumption. That's all!" To Gubitz, who doubted of his ability to undertake the journey to London, he replied in a tone of melancholy irony; "Whether I can or no, I must. Money must be made for my family—money, man. I am going to London to die there. Not a word! I know it as well as you." The bright, cheery, lively Weber, who revelled in the triumph of his "Freischütz," was already dead and gone.

At length came the night of the first production of "Euryanthe" in Berlin. It was on the 23d December, the most disadvantageous day, when all may have been supposed to have been occupied with family festivities. But as early as three o'clock in the afternoon the theatre was surrounded by a dense crowd. When the doors were opened, it was literally taken by storm. Madame Seidler as Euryanthe, Madame Schultz as Eglantine, Bader as Adolar, and Blume as Lysiart, all sang their best, in love and honour to the master. Every thing that scenery and decoration could do had been done to give due splendour to the music. The public listened with the deepest reverence, applauded with the warmest enthusiasm; and the long-desired opera achieved a success, due not only to the deep respect the public of Berlin entertained for the composer of "Der Freischütz," but to the truest delight of heart and soul. One brilliant ray of joy and triumph

gleamed once more through the gloomy mist which overhung the sinking artist's spirit. He was able to write with all truth to his other self at home, that he had received the "completest and most splendid triumph." After the performance, the hero of the night was carried off, almost by force, to the great Berlin "Jagor" restaurant, where a supper had been prepared in his honour. All the distinguished artists and musicians of Berlin were present on the occasion. Choruses from his own opera, with fresh words to befit the ceremony, were sung by the choristers of the theatre. Weber was deeply affected. Even his ancient enemy and bitterest antagonist, old Zelter, was subdued; and if the old bear still growled, it was "as any sucking dove." Midnight was past when the poor shattered man lay on his pain-tormented bed, and thanked God for all His mercies, and prayed for the spirit to appreciate them.

Gladly would Weber have travelled away to join the dear ones at home the very next day; but Count Brühl entreated him to remain in Berlin, until his affairs should be arranged with the management as speedily as possible: and Weber could not but feel how necessary was speed when the end might be so near at hand. Friends did all they could to cheer the sad and suffering man during this delay, by their own festive family joys: but it was no longer possible to chase the gloomy cloud from the brow of the poor man, who felt his doom. The "evil star," too, which Weber always feared, was again destined to shed its influence around him. Count Brühl had

never lost a moment in demanding for Weber his due remuneration of 800 thalers from Prince Wittgenstein. He pointed out to the Prince how large had been the receipts which had accrued to the theatre from "Der Freischütz;" how Spontini had received for each of his works as much as 1050 thalers; and how every feeling of propriety demanded that the greatest German composer of his time should not be paid in a far inferior manner to the foreigner. But this demand Prince Wittgenstein curtly refused. Brühl still persisted, with his usual eagerness and zeal; but all remained in harassing doubt. At last the minister gave way. Weber was permitted to receive 800 thalers for himself, and 100 for the authoress. But even this concession was made with evident reluctance. "It is by no means on the score of what you call 'propriety' that I give way," wrote the Prince to Count Brühl. "The 'propriety' which ought to be first considered is that of obeying the commands of his Majesty, to conduct the affairs of the theatre without incurring debts; and in this matter 'propriety' has been only too often disregarded." But this genuine aristocratic rebuff troubled the Count's delight but little. He brought the money to Weber, who lay shivering with fever in his bed, and gave it to him with a burst of tears.

It may be here narrated that a singular fate attended the opera of "Euryanthe" in Berlin as well as Vienna. Scarcely was the composer's back turned, when his charming ballet music was replaced by trivial and far more lengthy commonplaces; the tempo

of his pieces, as directed by himself, was disregarded; and much was hastily cut out, without care or tact, so as to destroy all harmony of proportion and all coherence in the opera. The consequence was, that by the fifth representation the house was empty, a vast quantity of tickets already taken having been sent back; and the result to the treasury of the theatre was a deficit.

Ignorant of this coming mortification, however, Weber left Berlin, after conducting his opera, on the second representation, to an overflowing house, and amidst the warmest acclamations. His friends, who accompanied him to his carriage, pressed his hand for the last time, with foreboding sorrow; they could not but feel that they should see him no more.

During his sojourn in Berlin, meanwhile, Weber had been relieved, although not agreeably, from the state of uncertainty relative to his affairs in England, which had weighed upon him so heavily. He received Charles Kemble's last and conclusive offer for the production of his "Oberon" in London. The aspiring wings on which his hopes had soared were so cruelly clipped, that for a long time he could not rouse himself sufficiently to come to a decision. At last he bowed his head resigned, and accepted all.*

* The following was the text of Weber's contract, as drawn up by his own hand:

"1. I accept your offer to give me 500*l.* sterling for the music of 'Oberon,' partition, and for the piano, as your property for Great Britain.

2. The poem and music are mine for all the rest of Europe.

3. You will bind every theatre or music-shop in Great Britain

which receives the 'Oberon' from you, to sell it no further to any theatre or music-shop in Europe.

4. You will be pleased to pay the named sum of 500*l.* sterling to me, after having received the whole partition of 'Oberon.'

5. If my health does not prevent me, I shall be in London the first days of March, to preside at the first representation of 'Oberon.'

6. You will be so just as to satisfy wishes that I could have relatively to some better instruments in the orchestra, or voices in the chorus; and you may be sure that I will not ask for other things than are perfectly necessary."

CHAPTER XII.

LONDON IN 1826.

THE nearer the great end approached, the more painful became the struggle which the celebrated artist was ceaselessly making against the pitiless and irresistible might of his undermining enemy. Fame, for which he had so long fought an arduous fight, was now his own: he had the proud consciousness of having won it with courage and with honour; but little was it now in his eyes compared with the interests of his beloved ones, so soon to be bereaved of all. The conviction that there was not a moment to spare, that he must reckon with a miser's avarice every pulse of that life so quickly ebbing from him, and that each must be used to the advantage of wife and children, in order to prevent their feeling the pressure of want when his eyes should be closed, was never absent from his wearied mind. This one thought was the guiding principle of all that remained to him of life.

That such was his state of mind is evident from the diminished interest he displayed in the book on which he was engaged, compared with his ceaseless

anxiety and preoccupation regarding the text of his "Euryanthe." In striking contrast with his multitudinous correspondence with Frau von Chezy stands the fact that he addressed but three letters to Planché on the subject. The same comparative listlessness may be seen in the diminution of all his previous carefulness to ascertain correctly the qualifications of the singers, the musical stage, and the public, for which he was composing his great work. It is only too clear that his prevailing thought was to complete, as speedily as possible, those labours which in England were to be converted into gold. The compelling power of this thought was manifest enough in the incessant exertion, by which he forced his panting chest to bend long hours at his work-table, spite wearing pain, racking cough, and brain weary with sleeplessness. And yet how full of life, and health, and freshness, was all that flowed from him in the weary struggle! It was thus, in pain and faintness, he composed that second finale to his opera, by the effect of which, as in every three-act work, a composer sets the highest store. And yet, again, how perfect, how wondrous, how replete with the most delicate art, as well in its instrumental effects as in its psychological intentions, is this magic dream of fairyland, including the mermaid's song, and the quintett during the dance of the elves! It may fearlessly be asserted, that it displayed an originality of beauty unsurpassed in its kind by any master in the world. In like state of suffering were composed the duett of Sherasmin and Fatima, so full of youth, and life, and hope; the fresh

bold terzett of the third act; and the seductive chorus with dance of Roshana's slaves. These bright jewels of music were poured upon paper in five days, amidst the constant lamentations of the suffering man that his power of creation had departed from him for ever.

By bearing this disposition of mind in view, it becomes comprehensible how it was that Weber, about this time, hastily negotiated with the newly instituted Königstadt theatre in Berlin for the future production of his "Oberon," to the annoyance of his friend Count Brühl, whose diminishing influence in the Prussian capital naturally made him more sensitive to the apparent slight of the composer, and with what views he addressed a fulminating circular to those stages of Germany, which he considered to be infringing his pecuniary rights. And, after all, he was never destined to reap the harvest of all these exertions!

His journey to England was now imminent. Before his departure, Weber regulated all his affairs in the most punctilious manner. The presentiment of the fast-approaching end rendered him doubly careful that all should be in order; and, in his last conferences with his legal friends, he was always anxious to insure the presence of his wife, whose strong practical good sense he knew. During these painful duties his personal appearance became so fearfully changed, that most of his friends began to fear he would no longer find strength sufficient for his journey. His form sank together: his voice was almost totally gone: his cough was incessant. In the circle

of intimates, who still visited him at that tea-table, of which his wit, and pleasantry, and genial humour had so long made the charm, he would often murmur, with a faint sad smile, "Don't take it ill, good people, if I drop asleep: indeed I cannot help it;" and his head would fall upon his breast. His poor wife suffered cruel agonies: she could not but feel that he was really spending the small remaining breath of life for the sake of her and her children. She manœuvered in secret to induce friends to persuade him that he ought to renounce his fearful journey, when all her own affectionate efforts to this intent had failed. But the response was ever the same sad one. "Whether I undertake this journey, or no, it is all one! Within a year I am a dead man. But if I go, my children will have bread, when their father is gone: if I do not, want may stare them in the face. What is to be done?" On one occasion, he added, "I should like to come back once more, and see my dear ones' faces yet again: and then, in God's name, let God's will be done! But to die there, it would be hard, very hard." The illness of his friend Roth, who was ever ready with a helping hand, rendered Weber's last days in the house he was never to see again, even still more painful.

And so at last drew near the day which was to take him away from those he loved so dearly. His last farewell to the assembled opera-troop and orchestra shook him fearfully: many tears were shed. From Prince Johann, on taking leave, he received the warmest wishes, and the most touching marks of re-

gard. The King was cold and repelling, as usual: his last interview with the genius, he had never comprehended, again inflicted pain. As for Minister Einsiedel, he was in the merriest of humours, and smiled jauntily on the departing man, whom he had so often injured. Ill as he was, Weber had done his duty even in the nicest points of court formality.

One pleasant ray of sun shone upon Weber's house at the last. The celebrated flute-player Fürstenau decided upon accompanying the almost helpless invalid upon his journey. He was personally dear to Weber; and he in turn loved and reverenced his chief. Poor anxious Caroline's mind was much relieved by the thought that a kind friend would be ever near her suffering husband.

The morning of the 7th of February had not yet dawned, after a night of bitter tears, when Weber's travelling carriage drove up to his door with Fürstenau. The time was come for the separation of the husband, who scarcely hoped to see his home again, from the loving wife, who felt that he was a dying man. Another tear upon the forehead of his sleeping children—another long lingering kiss—the suffering man dragged his swollen feet into his carriage, huddled feverishly in his furs—the door was closed—and he rolled away from home, on that cold winter's morning, sobbing till the shattered chest might burst at once. Caroline rushed back to her room, and sank on her knees, with the cry, "It is his coffin I heard closed upon him!" At the first post, Weber parted with his coachman and own horses. It

was the last wrench from home and its remembrances. His voluminous correspondence with his wife was the only tie left to Weber: and nothing can be more touching than these letters (amounting in all to fifty-three), in which the sufferer was always striving to conceal, as far as he could, his sufferings; the anxious woman, left behind, always repressing her own bitter anguish lest it should increase the other's sorrow.

The rapid journey seems to have inspirited Weber for a time. When there came a cessation of pain, or a ray of sun through the carriage-window, he was hopefully building castles-in-the-air for the time, when, with wife, and children, and hound, and ape, and pockets filled with toys and sweetmeats, he should be travelling to some land of vivifying brightness. But then again came the moral and material clouds around; and the poor man sank under renewed attacks of heimweh. Still the arrival in France again stimulated him. The novelty of life and manners in an unknown country was a constant source of fresh animation to him. He was enchanted with the first open fire-place he saw, delighted with the French cookery, and almost himself again, when at Epernay he could drink off a glass of genuine champagne to the health of the dear ones at home. When, on the 25th of February, he arrived in Paris, he was even able to jest once more in his letters to his wife. "Arrived in good condition," he wrote, "all but one carriage-window and a button off my pantaloons. The latter awaits my own restorative art."

Weber had determined to remain incognito in Paris, see few or no acquaintances, and enjoy thorough quiet. The resolve was impossible. His feverish restlessness drove him out the day after his arrival to pay visits to his colleagues in art, then in the French capital; among others, to Paër, Auber, Cherubini, and Rossini. "The palaces inhabited by these fine fellows might almost excite my envy," he wrote. By Rossini, the German composer was received with almost overpowering politeness, conducted with homage into his apartment, and reconducted with bared head to the bottom of the staircase: his visit was returned the very same evening. These demonstrations of respect, Weber looked upon merely as pleasant manifestations of Rossini's tact and courtly breeding. He was far more deeply touched and delighted, when old gray-headed Cherubini, whom he greatly reverenced, twice visited him in his hotel. Every musician of note, however, in Paris showed his regard and interest for the celebrated German. Each of his visits to the theatres became an ovation; and at a dinner at Schlesinger's, where Pasta sang for his own especial gratification, he was so overpowered by his honours, that he grieved he had ever renounced his intended incognito. He drew back alarmed, and hastened the preparations for his departure. Even the munificent offers he received for compositions, to be written expressly for Paris, failed to interest him now, when rest was all he longed for: the prospect of the production of his "Euryanthe" at the Académie Royale de Musique could no longer give him pride

and pleasure as of yore. Two things alone seem to have caught his fancy in the great French metropolis —Boildieu's new opera, "La Dame Blanche," and— the oysters! The opera delighted him. "What a charm in it! What humour!" he wrote to Theodor Hell. "Such a comic opera has never been composed since the Figaro. Get the book from Schlesinger, translate it off-hand, and make Musje Marschner put it upon the stage at once. It is a prize for our repertoire."

It was on a cold unfriendly March morning that Weber left Paris with Fürstenau, and took his way over Amiens and Montreuil to Calais. Here the consequences of all his imprudent exertions in Paris had nigh ended his life at once. For a long time he gasped for breath. But his indomitable spirit had still a mastery over the weak body. By force of his own will he rallied in time to cross the Channel with the next packet. He soon felt himself re-animated by the sight of the world of waters—which he had always loved—and the beautiful scenery of the English coast as he approached. A strange sentiment of almost joyous humour fell on him as he landed in Dover. The first impression, too, which he received in England was a pleasant one. The passengers were still standing crowded together awaiting the ordeal of luggage and passport examination, when Weber heard his name loudly called. A revenue-officer advanced, and, on his announcing himself, informed him that orders had been given that M. de Weber should be received with every mark of respect, and that his luggage should

pass the custom-house unexamined. Thus, holding out his hand, he led the astonished composer ashore, with an air of profound reverence.

Sir George Smart, during his interviews with Weber at Ems and Dresden, had conceived a great affection for the German composer: he had urgently intreated him to look upon his house in London as his own home. Weber had accepted this invitation with joy. The friendship of this admirable and amiable man was the consolation and solace of Weber's last hours.

Weber's own pen must be left to paint his journey to London, and his "home" in the house of Sir George Smart. After a lengthy account of an English stage-coach of the period, he writes: "And thus we dashed along like lightning through a country beyond all description charming. The meadows are of the loveliest green, the gardens full of bright flowers, and all the houses of an elegance and neatness, which contrast in the most incredible way with the dirt of France." "Here, in Smart's house," he wrote again, "I am excellently well taken care of. Every possible comfort is provided—a bath-room in the house. We dined at six; and by ten o'clock I was in my good bed, where I slept charmingly till seven. Fürstenau is lodged close by. I found a host of visiting-cards awaiting my arrival. One of the first pianoforte-makers has provided me with an admirable instrument, which, in a charming note, he begs me to make him happy by using during my stay..... I am allowed to be alone the whole day until five; then we

dine and go to the theatre, or into society. . . . . My solitude in England in no way oppresses me. English life and manners are thoroughly sympathetic to my nature; and my little bit of English, in which I am making tremendous progress, is of incredible advantage to me. The English delight in hearing me speak the language. . . . . People are all so good to me with their anxious care. No king can be served with greater love and affection in all things than I am. I am as much cosseted and caressed as a baby in arms. . . . . To show you how undisturbed I am, I will now describe the house. Smart lives on the ground-floor, and there, too, is the dining-room. On the first-floor are the reception-rooms, and on the second my bed-room and study, where no one is allowed to come without being announced. People are sent away without ceremony if I cannot see them; and nobody takes this ill. A servant and his wife, whom Smart has had with him sixteen years, wait on me in perfection. You see, dearest, I could not be better taken care of. . . . . When once a thing is said, 'tis done, and always. . . . . All is *comme il faut*, all excellent. I cannot be sufficiently grateful to Heaven for the blessings which surround me."

A glance at the arena on which Weber was now about to enter, as it existed at this period, may not be out of place. Like all the more important phases of English progress, the cultivation of music in England may be said to have developed itself without any influence in its direction from sovereign or court. It was from other ranks in society that the foster-

ing cultivation of all taste had proceeded. From its nobility and gentry the country had invariably received the imperious mandate as to what was to be considered good or bad: and it had been thus destined to pass through various periods of painful development, which, under the auspices of a prince of fine feeling, tact, and true love of art, might have been considerably modified. The energetic and practical spirit of the English people—the "strong Saxon spirit," as it has been called—was always a powerful basis for its wonderful cultivation of the more manly arts of architecture and poetry; but it was no soil for the natural growth of music, the most tender and sensuous of all. And thus it was that the culture of exotic plants of Italian or German origin had come to be a matter of fashion, dictated by society, like the cut of a coat or the form of a hat. The natural result had been, that a devotion to any established name and fame had been accepted as the due order of things, and that England, with its enormous wealth, had been looked upon by foreign artists merely as an Eldorado for the satisfaction of their greed of gain. By an inevitable consequence, the artist had come to be regarded simply as a manufacturer of certain wares, which might be sold and bought without further acknowledgment or regard. But as any extraordinary display, whether of a practical or an ideal nature, was sure to excite a certain degree of enthusiasm in the English people, always energetically displayed, any great musical reputation had always called forth the noisiest demonstrations of

sympathy from it; although, indeed, the same would have been bestowed upon any notoriety whatever. There had been, perhaps, only one direction in which the cultivation of music had fully coincided with the manners, life, and feelings of the English nation; and this had been when it was in some way connected with religious sentiment.

The powerful influence of Händel's great genius had thus penetrated into the inmost recesses of English life. All that the courts of Charles I. and James I. could not do for the cultivation of dramatic music by the encouragement of Ben Jonson's masques and Laws's compositions,—all that Purcell and Arne, and other doctors of music, had been unable to achieve in a dramatic sense,—had been effected by the religious music of Händel, so full of dramatic life: and it was more from his compositions than from any other source, that the English nation conceived its ideas of the musical drama. In the commencement of the eighteenth century, moreover, fashion and national vanity combined to build a splendid temple for Italian opera. It is, at the same time, characteristic enough of the national tendency, that the court never deigned to assist this enterprise, which was solely based upon the private exertions of the fashionable Italian-loving dilettanti of the day. Thus was built, about 1720, the well-known "King's Theatre" in the Haymarket. Italian dramatic music became in England now as much the rage as in German courts in the eighteenth century. Opera rose to be more or less an affair of fashion. Covent Gar-

den and Drury Lane, which had hitherto been the temples of the recited drama alone, felt themselves obliged in time to follow in the wake; and at last the present Lyceum Theatre in the Strand was opened with the exclusive denomination of "English Opera House." Neither Italian or English Opera, however, received any subsidiary aid from the court. Each had to fight a bold and often despairing fight for its existence. The struggle was a severe one. On the one hand the public demanded a splendour which should do honour to the nation and the mighty metropolis in the eyes of Europe, and be supported by all the great celebrities of the day: on the other, the demands of such celebrities grew more and more exorbitant. Permanent companies became thus out of the question. The celebrities could only be engaged at intervals; and, moreover, the fashionable season was but of brief duration. Under the circumstances of such an unequal contest as this, the operatic stages were continually falling into a deplorable condition. The musical speculations which had a religious and strictly national tendency were alone able to thrive with any degree of permanent prosperity.

But, at the same time, the musical institutes of England, not devoted to dramatic lyrical productions, were gradually taking an important position in the social life of London; and it is again highly characteristic of the state of things that the "Royal Music Band," which stood more immediately in the service of the King, under Cramer's conductorship, had no

influence whatever in this national development of the cultivation of music. Three institutes alone, at this period, stood forward in prominence; and two of these were based upon the supremacy of religious music, although they admitted secular productions, not always of the most artistic character, for the sake of tickling the ears of the subscribers with a certain degree of mundane melody. These were "The Society for Sacred and Ancient Music," for the production of purely classical works; and "The Royal Society of Musicians," founded in 1800, which gave still more mixed performances of religious and secular music. The third institute was that of the "Vocal Concerts," less patronised by the highest classes of society, but more strictly sympathetic to the hearts of the masses. Here the popular and truly English catches and glees were given, as well as national songs. "Benefit concerts" and "professional concerts" there were in plenty. It was for the so-called "oratorio concerts," however, that was reserved the special peculiarity of uniting the richest and most varied musical treats for the public with opportunities of earning fame and money for the artists. In Covent Garden Theatre first originated these concerts, the success of which was so great that the rival theatre of Drury Lane quickly followed in its wake. But the gradual increase of the love for secular music soon caused a notable change in the strictly serious nature of the performances given; and instrumental works of celebrity were loudly demanded. Thus, Beethoven's, Haydn's, and Mozart's symphonies were

to be heard along with Cherubini's, Mehul's, Spontini's, and Rossini's overtures; until at last a mixture of thoroughly profane music with the original religious works became the order of the day.

Meanwhile, however, the English worship of the exclusive and aristocratic, at that period, demanded a field of its own; and the "Philharmonic Concerts," at which subscribers, musicians, and musical works were all to be considered of "the first water," thus arose. Here the would-be exclusive London world fought for places with as much energy and intrigue as though it were contesting a seat in Parliament. Here, too, the most eminent artists, as well foreign as English, aspired to the distinction of being included amongst the members of an institute, where noble dilettanti for the first time did them honour. Two symphonies, two overtures, a concerto, and two or three solo vocal pieces, were the standing dishes offered to those who sat with complacency at the overflowing table.

In this state of things, the literary publications devoted to music were not without a considerable influence. The "Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review," the "Harmonium," the "Journal of Music and Drama," and the "Encyclopædia of Music"—all, more or less, claimed to direct and influence the public taste, gave oracular opinions, and exercised the power of issuing judgments, for life or death, against which there was no appeal. Of the same order were the criticisms in the daily journals.

Great as was thus the difference between the out-

ward musical world of London and that of German cities, it was still greater, at that period of the nineteenth century, in private circles and family life. The cultivation of music among all classes, as in the great capitals of Germany, where princesses sang in social circles, and monarchs were proud to walk arm-in-arm with artists, was a thing unknown in England. Music at that time was a mere toy of fashion; the performances of dilettanti were almost unknown; in the middle and lower classes scarcely a note was heard; and in the wealthiest and highest music was purchased as a luxury. The most distinguished artists were invited into noble houses, well paid, and put before the guests no more or less than any other "dainty dish" of the banquet; but they acquired no right thereby to be considered as a portion of the society. Their performances were bought like any other fashionable article; and all their talent won neither respect or thanks. They came and went, but never as guests. The very servants would have turned up their noses at the degradation of presenting them refreshment. The master and mistress of the house pointed out to them, with lordly condescension, their place, which was frequently even divided off from the general company by a cord. It was enough for the party-givers to say, "The celebrated so-and-so played at our house; we gave him so much for the evening." The guests chatted and laughed during the performance, and, even when their attention was aroused by some very distinguished celebrity, never deigned any token of their

approbation. The neglected artists could but leave such a house mortified and indignant, with their guineas in their pockets as their consolation. Some few, such as Spohr and Rossini, had strength of nerve or audacity sufficient to break through the barrier and set at nought the insolent comment. But this relative position of wealth and genius, for a considerable period, continued to characterise the so-called love of art in England, and, until a very recent date, remained a blot upon the civilisation of a great and powerful people.

At all events, such was the condition of the artistic world when Weber arrived in London, in February 1826. Weber's name, however, stood high above the general level, and was in every body's mouth. Even before "Der Freischütz" was given in London, its melodies had found their way to England, and had tickled the ears of all classes by their magic charm of novelty, so as to have achieved a great popularity as early as the end of 1823. On the 2d July 1824, "Der Freischütz" had been given at the English Opera House (the present Lyceum Theatre), under circumstances of some excitement, and with considerable expectations. The success was very great. The expectations were completely fulfilled, and eventually far surpassed, in spite of the miserably mutilated state in which the opera was given, with a weak orchestra, and generally defective execution. The celebrated tenor Braham had the tastelessness to introduce into his part an old German song, "Good Night," and an English po-

lacca; whilst Miss Stephens, who first undertook the part of Agnes, or Agathe, sang the well-known German ditty, "War's vielleicht um Eins," instead of the duett between the two women; and the duett between Agathe and Max was sung to an entirely different composition. Covent Garden followed with a version no less crippled and deformed. In spite of this cruel treatment, the opera spread far and wide, until it reached the theatres of a fourth-rate order, where further liberties were again taken with the unhappy music. It may be fairly said, however, that nowhere was the mutilation of Weber's music more madly and recklessly exercised than when arranged by the celebrated composer Bishop, and played on the boards of Drury Lane under his unlucky auspices. Yet even here "Der Freischütz," thus transmogrified, achieved the greatest triumph.

In spite of all, the fresh, powerful, brilliant melodies of "Der Freischütz" had penetrated the masses; and a fanatic rage for the music, far exceeding even the enthusiasm of the German people—a veritable Freischütz mania—had flooded all England. Variations of the melodies were composed for all instruments, from the piano to the Jews'-harp; oratorio concerts and hand-organs were alike crammed with pieces from "Der Freischütz;" butchers'-boys whistled the airs, or something like them, in every street; and a travestie in verse, with the celebrated George Cruikshank's humorous etchings, was one of the popular pamphlets of the day. Every work of Weber's had been hunted up, to take its share in the fana-

tical popularity. "Abu Hassan" was given at Drury Lane; "Preciosa" at the English Opera House.

This frenzy had reached its culminating point about the time when Charles Kemble had made overtures to Weber for a new opera, composed expressly for the Covent-Garden stage. But a reaction had shortly afterwards set in. To any one who, knowing the perpetual change of fashion's fancies, had watched the signs of the times in London, it was very easy to perceive that the fanaticism for Weber's productions was gradually settling down into the usual ordinary channel of commonplace interest. It is indubitable that, had Weber come to London only six months earlier, he might have left the capital a wealthier man; whereas he only came to witness the saddening sight of a stream of enthusiasm fast diminishing, when no longer supplied by the torrent which had filled it to overflowing, and to feel that the grains of gold, he might once have gathered with full hands upon the banks, were now but scanty.

His appearance in London, however, with a new opera, naturally excited an unusual and general sensation; and it was soon evident that he would be received with homage, such as was rarely or never paid to any living artist. His engagements, as has been already hinted, were threefold. For his composition of "Oberon" he was to receive 500*l.* from the management of Covent Garden. For his own conducting of twelve representations of the opera he had insisted on further receiving the sum of 225*l.* The direction of four oratorio concerts was to bring him

in 100*l.* more. The amount of his receipts was thus set down at 825*l.* This much was assured to him. His chances of further remuneration depended on his own benefit, a concert, and such receipts as he might derive from other sources. The fond hope of obtaining all he could for the dear ones, who were so soon to lose his fostering aid, urged him to stake his last breath of life on the result.

Scarcely had Weber arrived in London when he drove off to Covent Garden with Sir George Smart, in order to study the disposition of the orchestra, and the general arrangements of the theatre. The report had been spread about that Weber would probably appear in Kemble's box that night. The house was crammed. The piece given was "Rob Roy." Every eye was directed to the manager's box, when Weber entered. Little dreaming of what might ensue, and thinking himself unobserved, he advanced to the front of the box to look at the house. Suddenly came a cry of "There's Weber! there's Weber!" A veritable tempest of applause broke forth. Hats and handkerchiefs were waved; whilst the bewildered composer kept looking around to discover the cause of the tumult, which he could not ascribe to himself. All at once it came across him that it was his own name, so strangely pronounced in the English tongue, that he heard thus shouted by a thousand voices. He was overwhelmed. Timidly he bowed around. Then came a universal call for the overture to "Der Freischütz." The performance was suspended, and the overture was played. Again, and again, and again burst forth

the shoutings and applaudings; and at last, the honoured man had nothing else to do but to retire from his box for a while. "I was deeply affected, as much as I was surprised," he wrote to Caroline on the occasion, "although not wholly unaccustomed to such things. . . . Could it be the English, generally called so cold, who thus received me? It seemed incredible. . . . What would I not have given for you to have seen me in my foreign garb of honour! . . . And now, my beloved life, make yourself perfectly easy about the singers and the orchestra. Miss Paton is a singer of the very first order, and will sing my Rezia divinely; Braham no less so, although in quite a different style. There are other very good tenors in the company; and I cannot understand what people mean by abusing English singing. The singers display a perfectly good Italian school, and have fine voices, with considerable expression. The orchestra is not very remarkable, but is good enough; and the choruses are excellent. In short, I feel I need have no fears as to the result of my 'Oberon.' . . . I went afterwards to a concert in Hanover Square Rooms, where all the first Italian singers, Velluti among others, sang. But Miss Paton, who came in after the theatre, and sang a grand air, beat them all hollow."

But great as the reception of Weber had been on his first appearance, it was far exceeded by the triumphant homage showered on him, when he first officially came forward in public to conduct the "Oratorio Concerts" at Covent Garden. The public was all in evening dress. An utter stillness prevailed,

until Sir George Smart led the pale little man, dressed all in black, upon the stage, where the orchestra was situated. Then the whole house rose as one man. Thousands of British throats shouted a British homage to the modest foreigner. Men sprang on the benches to wave their hats; the women waved their handkerchiefs. For a full quarter of an hour the shouting continued, whilst Weber stood, with downcast eyes, paler than usual, holding convulsively to his desk, and bowing from time to time, in the midst of the tumultuous mass. It was long before he could raise his hand, to give the signal to begin, with a roll of paper he held, in order to conduct in German fashion. Twelve pieces of his miserably crippled "Der Freischütz" were to be given for the first time in their true form. The overture and almost every one of the other pieces were encored. Braham sang the Max, Miss Paton the Agathe, with true artistic inspiration. The applause throughout was tremendous. The celebrated pianist Moscheles saw Weber after the concert in the green-room. He was sitting weak and exhausted, but smiling pleasantly, in the midst of a perfect mob of musical enthusiasts. He pressed the hand of Moscheles, and whispered him, "Did they but know this at home!" The same feeling was in his mind, when, on describing the scene to Caroline, he wrote, "Tell Lüttichau the whole world honours me, except my King!"

Weber had coughed much during the concert, and the next day the household of Sir George Smart was perfectly bewildered with the presents of jellies,

sweets, lozenges, and other cough-remedies, which were poured into the house for Weber. The London gas oppressed the suffering man's chest; but with the English fare and style of living Weber was enchanted. "The excellence of flesh and fowl is indescribable," he wrote to his wife. "I have had set before me chickens which, without exaggeration, are as large as middle-sized geese with us. And the meat is so tender and juicy—ah! and the oysters! If I could but conjure you over here. We have no idea of such oysters!" After a lengthy description of the course of an English dinner, he terminated with the verdict, "All this is pleasant and highly advantageous to sociability: French manners appear to me egotistical by the side of these English customs."

Triumphant, however, as had been Weber's official reception in public, the homage paid him in society was but very small, the attentions he received slight indeed. The simplicity of his proudly-shy nature, as much as his bodily weakness and his deep melancholy, prevented his making such an appearance as to inspire respect by his own individuality. It would have been utterly impossible to his nature to have driven up to the mansions of the great ones of society with brilliant carriage and powdered footmen, and to have sold his concert-tickets for nameless sums, like Rossini. There was nothing imposing in the apparition of the poor bowed man, leaving that quiet house in Great Portland Street on foot, or in his hackney coach. The nobility evidently considered the toy too little brilliant for a place in their drawing-rooms;

the people soon tired of looking at the simple little man, who slunk about in such piteous guise. But the more Weber felt himself sundered from the world, above or below, in England, the warmer did his weakening hand grasp the hands of the friends who congregated around his arm-chair, and brought the breath of homeishness about him in the foreign land. Among these friends were noble Sir George Smart, who nursed him with such affectionate care; and Fawcett, the excellent stage-manager of Covent Garden; and the popular Braham, whom Weber loved as man as much as singer; and the talented Charles Kemble, the manager, one of the greatest actors of his time; and Moscheles, and Fürstenau, and Dr. Kind, a nephew of the poet, in whose treatment Weber's confidence was great. And so his last days in England were not otherwise than days of comfort and affection.

On the 9th of March the rehearsals of "Oberon" began; and Weber heard the first tones of his new work. The more he learned to know his singers and his orchestra, the more his confidence in the success of his work increased. "I was perfectly surprised," he wrote to his wife after the first rehearsal, "to find how well every thing went. I am fully content with my solo singers; but unfortunately my prima donna is ill, and the production must be delayed. The young fellow who was to have sung Puck has lost his voice; but I have a charming girl,* who is very

* Miss H. Cawse.

clever and sings capitally. An immense deal is done for the scenery and machinery: all I have seen is most beautifully imagined; and the costumes have been indicated by the author with infinite taste and fancy." In fact all the dresses had been selected and drawn by Planché himself from the very best authorities, and with great research. His taste and learning in this respect were celebrated in England.

Poor Weber! In his pride and joy in England he might have been a happy man, had not death's hand been on him. "Good heavens!" he wrote to his wife, "how inexpressibly fortunate thousands would think themselves were they in my place; and I cannot enjoy the brightness of all around me! ... Well, nothing can be perfect in this world. Where there is much light, there is much shade; so back I must go, with patience, to my old device,—Be it as God will!"

Beyond Braham, with his well-managed, although somewhat worn, tenor voice and his fine style, and Miss Paton, whom Weber himself called his great "trump card," the composer was fortunate in having Madame Vestris as his Fatima, a part which she sang and played deliciously. Fawcett as Sherasmin, and Bland as Oberon, were the weakest in the "cast." But Weber could not refuse the former part to his good friend the stage-manager, who was so desirous of singing it; and for the latter, the only voice of sufficient compass had to be selected.

In the rehearsals Braham found his air too high; and it had to be laid aside. But a great air the tenor

was necessarily to have; and Braham wanted a grand bravura song. New words for a brilliant scena were obtained from Planché. On this composition, which in style and treatment was altogether contrary to his views, Weber set to work unwillingly. The air, telling of a "charge of Christian chivalry," was decked out with all Weber's brilliancy of musical declamation; but it remained indisputably the weakest piece in the whole opera. "I hate the whole business," wrote Weber to his wife; "but what is to be done? Braham is the idol of the public; and so I must swallow the bitter potion. . . . And I so love my original air. I shall keep it for Germany, you may be very sure!" Nor was the composer without other little troubles during his rehearsals. Miss Paton could not take heart to sing her air in her finale of the first act, which she considered "would not tell." "Read your words over well first, without thinking of the notes, and you will see how it will go," said Weber. Miss Paton took the hint; and the result was admirable. On another occasion, as unseen he leaned against the balustrade of the orchestra, Miss Goward, who sang the mermaid's song behind the scenes, could not contrive to keep time with the band. "Cut that out!" cried Fawcett, with impatience. "Cut it out?" shouted Weber, to the surprise of all, as he sprang with one bound over the balustrade into the orchestra, and mounted to the conductor's desk: "What do you mean? I'll soon show you how it will go;" and, after pointing out the place where the singer could best be heard, and directing the due tone of the band,

he soon showed indeed that his wondrous song would, could, and should "go." On the marvels of the machinery provided for the fairy effects of his opera, Weber could never expatiate sufficiently; nor could he ever tire of examining it with the utmost complacency.

Sixteen rehearsals in all were held of "Oberon." But, meanwhile, Weber's labours of directing the "Oratorio Concerts," according to his contract, were still continued. These concerts brought together the public best able to sympathise with Weber. When he conducted his own works, the applause was always as genuine as it was enthusiastic. Not one of them was allowed to be given without a selection of pieces from "Der Freischütz;" and it was wonderful to see the pleasure which lighted up the faces of all, every time the magic melodies were played under the auspices of their creator. Hundreds came again and again, and yet burst out each time into the same enthusiastic demonstrations at every piece. At the second concert, at which Händel's "Acis and Galathea" was given, the same pieces from "Der Freischütz" were again performed, and, as usual, the overture, the Laughing chorus, the Bridesmaids' chorus, and the Huntsman's chorus vociferously encored. At the third, again the "Der Freischütz," with Locke's music to "Macbeth." But on this occasion the "Jubilee Overture" was given, and carried the day over all. Weber was tumultuously called upon the stage after its performance; and unanimous acclamation insisted on its repetition. So again at the

fourth concert. Again was the "Jubilee Overture" demanded—even redemanded for a third time. But Weber was now exhausted; he felt it to be impossible for him to comply with the demands of the popular frenzy. It was after this last concert, that frightful spasms of the chest, and blood-spitting again set in. At a dinner given by Mr. Ward, a member of Parliament, Sir George Smart and Mori were obliged to carry him up the stairs into the drawing-room. But even yet was the poor suffering creature's spirit strong within him; he exerted himself, even in this wretched state, sufficiently to shine in a genial flow of wit and humour. Weber was, indeed, already nigh at his last gasp; yet he still found strength, in his good will, to conduct the overture to "Der Freischütz" once again for the benefit of Fawcett the actor, for whom he had conceived a great esteem.

Weber's constant employment upon the most popular of all his operas produced, when combined with his state of excessive nervous irritability, a most terrible impression on his mind. This painful state of feeling had been first superinduced by the perpetual comparisons, dinned into his ears in Germany, between "Der Freischütz," and the favourite child of his predilection and pride, "Euryanthe." It had now grown into a chronic condition of despair at the disparagement of what he considered his noblest work to the advantage of its predecessor, and of bitter hatred to "Euryanthe's" victorious rival. Wherever he appeared, he heard nothing but "Der Freischütz;"

delight with "Der Freischütz;" admiration of the composer of "Der Freischütz." Young ladies sang to him the airs from "Der Freischütz;" artists played him variations on themes from "Der Freischütz." Every where "Der Freischütz!" He felt himself gnawed to the bones by the hungry rats of Bishop Hatto of the Rhine! He hated "Der Freischütz" in its very name; he hated it for having done so little for his family. The very mention of the unlucky opera drove him into fits of rage. To one of the most influential musical men of the day, who boasted that he had done much to introduce "Der Freischütz" into England, he answered with vexation: "You had better have left it alone: you would have spared me much annoyance; and I have had nothing else from it as yet." When, at a party, as he sat wearied on a sofa, after a long extempore performance, a lady asked him to play the overture to "Der Freischütz," he raised himself with pain, and answered bitterly, "You do right to remind me of my error in ever arranging an overture as a piano piece; I will play it to you, as my own punishment for such a gross mistake." To his wife he wrote in this state of exasperated feeling: "They talk of giving 'Der Freischütz' at Covent Garden. My horror at the thought is more than I can tell you. Think of the awful nuisance of hammering through this opera again from beginning to end. The bare idea drives me to distraction. But, they say it is to be given for my benefit. So, in Heaven's name, let it be!" Poor Weber was utterly exhausted!

But the time was come when he was to feel the contrast between the ardent and honourable enthusiasm bestowed upon him by the British public, and his reception by that English aristocracy, before which he had neglected to bow his head, and with which his personal appearance was no passport to favour. This lesson was to be learned at the "Philharmonic Concerts," the aristocratic institute *par excellence*, in which the worship of Rossini was the idolatry of fashion, and Italian artists ruled supreme. What, then, had induced the invitation to the German master? Perhaps some curiosity; perhaps some feeling of shame. On the 13th of March, when Weber first entered the Argyle Rooms, where the "Philharmonic Concerts" took place, he was most warmly received by the assembled orchestra, composed of all the best instrumental artists of their day: from the audience assembled came not a sound. Symphonies by Haydn and Beethoven were given on this occasion in his honour; and to his wife, Weber, generally so sparing in his praise of such performances, wrote: "It is an excellent institution; the orchestra is admirable; I was delighted." On the 3d of April he was himself engaged to conduct the orchestra, receiving for his pains the munificent sum of 15*l*. His overtures to "Euryanthe" and "Der Freischütz" were performed in a manner so artistic and so masterly, that a benignant smile rested, like a beam from heaven, on his face during the whole time. His cold audience, it is true, was roused to applause. But to Weber it appeared that there was an insolent condescension

even in this partial demonstration: it wounded him to the quick and angered him. He left the orchestra painfully excited and shivering with fever; and his friends could not but remark with alarm, that from that moment a notable deterioration in his unhappy condition took place. The blood-spitting became more frequent and more painful; his difficulty of respiration more oppressive than ever. More and more violent remedies were applied. "In God's name let me suffer this too," he exclaimed in a tone of resignation: and yet, fast sinking as he appeared to be, he could not be withheld from conducting his overture to "Euryanthe" at the concert of his much-beloved friend Moscheles. Again, on this occasion, his name filled the over-crowded rooms.

Although Weber had no better fortune in pleasing the "nobility and gentry" of England than he had in winning the favour of the German nobles great or small, and derived none of the profits he had hoped from them, yet in some of the very highest circles he was received with homage and delight. To the Duchess of Kent, Prince Leopold (the present King of the Belgians), and the Duke of Clarence, he had brought letters from his amiable patron Prince Friedrich of Saxony; and by these royal personages he was welcomed with the honours elsewhere bestowed on a great artist. In the house of the Duchess of Kent, on two occasions, he could have fancied himself once more in the highest German society, where artists sat with princes round the tea-table in unreserved and enlightened conversation. Here a charming child, about

seven years of age, laughed and played with the royal personages: it was the daughter of the Duchess, Victoria, now the Sovereign of one of the mightiest kingdoms of the earth. German was here spoken around Weber; and his bosom heaved once more so pleasantly at all the tokens of regard and sympathy which were lavished on him, that when asked by the Duchess of Kent to accompany her in some of his own songs, which she sang to perfection, he almost forgot that death was already gnawing so cruelly at his last sources of life within. At a dinner given for him by the Duke of Clarence, in the country, he again found strength to revive for a space. He saw, for the first time, with as much surprise as delight, the best type of that inimitable English comfort which was the ideal of all his dreams, as the highest state of enjoyment of existence.

Among the few of those considered as constituting the "distinguished society" of the British metropolis, who admitted Weber into their houses on that footing to which, as a great artist, he had been accustomed, may be mentioned Lord Burghersh and the Marquis of Hertford. From all in whose houses he had appeared and performed, he had received no more, when every thing was counted to the uttermost, than 90*l*. Such was the result of all the expectations he had not unduly raised.

Weber's description of a party, at which he was present, at the Marquis of Hertford's, is characteristic in its way. "I drove to the house," he wrote to his wife, "about half-past ten. Good heavens!

what a crowd of people! between five and six hundred, and all in splendid dress. Almost all the Italian opera company was present. A great deal was sung; but not a creature listened. The chattering and screaming of the good people was terrific. When I played, there was an attempt to establish a little quiet; and about a hundred people came around me. But what they heard, heaven only knows! I heard but little of what I played myself. I was compelled to be like the others, think of my guineas, and—be patient."

It is impossible to wonder too much at the astounding power with which the great master, in the midst of all the whirlpool of business, the rehearsals, the direction of concerts, and the parties, when every breath seemed to be his last, when his bitter and almost insupportable heimweh was added to all his bodily sufferings, when evil influences increased around him day by day, and exertions had to be made which might have exhausted the healthiest and strongest, so hugged his genius to himself that, amidst all, he was enabled to hear its sweetest whisperings. His animated rondo for Huon, in the third act, "I revel in hope and joy again" (which, it must be admitted, however, betrays a certain degree of feebleness of invention); his second air for Rezia; and above all, Fatima's lovely romance, "Oh, Araby, dear Araby!" —that effusion so full of yearning love—that masterwork, in which the last fire of Weber's hopes and fond affections flickered up in song—that essence of Weber's individuality—were all finished during this

period of cruel suffering, and even more cruel depression.

Of the new air for Braham, which it had cost him so much to compose, Weber wrote to his wife: "I had made a vow not to write to you until this tiresome air was finished. So you may guess if I worked hard. It is done now; and, when a small remaining portion of my overture is terminated, another opera will be brought into the world. God grant that it is worth something! Not that I seem to care much; my own music is more odious to me day by day." The portion of the overture was completed; and on the 9th April Weber wrote at the end of his score, as was his wont, "*Soli Deo gloria!*" But he deceived himself; all was not yet ended. Braham could not find in the whole opera any one piece in which his fine voice could be heard to the best advantage; and he earnestly begged that something yet might be composed. The only fitting place which could be found was in the scene after the shipwreck; and thus originated the prayer in the second act, to the words, "Ruler of this awful hour." The whole piece was conceived in a spirit of the greatest simplicity, but was admirably adapted to all the principal beauties of the tenor's voice.

A sad reaction followed upon the state of artistic excitement in which Weber had completed his great work. A smile now seldom played over those ashy-pale features; his hands trembled so violently, that it was with difficulty he could convey his food to his mouth; and his feet became so swollen, that he could

no longer wear his shoes. The deepest melancholy fell upon him; and his yearnings for home became more terrible than ever. "How glad I am," he wrote to his anxious wife, "to sit here alone, and know nothing of theatres and all that belongs to them! . . . I do, however, what I must, and *can* do." . . "Every thing you tell me," he wrote again, "of any domestic trifles, interests me far more than all the matters of real importance here. It brings me to your side again. . . . My last Indian corn I brought from Dresden is gone, and I breakfast on arrowroot; and I have put on my last clean Dresden shirt. Can you understand how both these little matters go to my heart?"

A few excursions in the beautiful neighbourhood of London revived the poor sinking man for a time. Richmond delighted him. Chelsea, Greenwich, and the Thames, with its forest of shipping, made the greatest impression on him. He was able to resume the rehearsals of "Oberon" with more vigour and in better spirits. But the "evil star," which he always imagined had accompanied him through life, was still to exercise its influence. His cherished prima donna, Miss Paton, then the wife of Lord William Lennox, lost a beloved child. It was feared that her state of health, in the despair of her bereavement, would have incapacitated her from singing in the opera. But the sorrowing woman at length found resolution to appear. Still all was not over. "My 'star,'" wrote Weber to his wife, "will not relax its blighting influence. At the general rehearsal," which took place in the evening,

"a numerous and distinguished public filled the boxes. In the storm-scene of the second act a pause. Some time elapsed. Nobody entered. At last appeared Fawcett the stage-manager, to announce that a piece of scenery had fallen on the head of Miss Paton, and that she was unable to appear. After a long delay we were obliged to continue the rehearsal without our principal singer. Otherwise all went well, and with the best hopes of a furore." Another drawback arose from the fact that the rival establishment of Drury Lane, desirous of catching the reflected rays, at least, of the brilliancy of Weber's name, or, at all events, to injure the prospects of its enemy as much as possible, had devised the jealous trick of producing, previously to Weber's opera, a melodrama, called "Oberon," with the greatest pomp of scenery and decoration. "A very stupid affair," wrote Weber, who witnessed the performance of this vamped-up opponent, "with detestable music, no interest of plot, and wretched acting. The scenery, however, was magnificent, the dresses splendid, the fairy effects magical. . . . There was much applause, but more hissing. In fact, the whole affair proved so little effective, that I cannot think it can do us any harm."

On the morning of the 12th of April, Weber was fully able to declare that the effect of his opera was as good as could be achieved with the materials at his disposition. The scenery and machinery he pronounced to be beyond all praise. And so came the third eventful evening in Weber's life—the evening which was to give to the world one of his great works, and now

the last! It may well be conceived that in his weak and nervous state he should have been even far more excited than, three years before, on the production of "Euryanthe." As on the previous occasions, a considerable sensation had been roused. For weeks past, every ticket for the first twelve representations of "Oberon" had been bought up. At the last moment, fine gentlemen fought for the last places in the topmost gallery. The house was crammed to suffocation. As Weber drove up to the theatre, a stentorian voice among the noisy and fermenting crowd shouted, "Weber is arriving!" and, in a moment, all was so hushed and still, that when the composer entered the orchestra, he was horrorstruck by the breathless silence, and thought the house was empty. But he mounted to his desk, with the firm step his excitement gave him; and now burst forth a yell of acclamation so loud, so long, that his breath almost failed him. The whole audience had risen to receive him. For nigh a quarter of an hour, the shouting, the cries of "hurrah," the thumping on the benches, the clapping of hands, and, perhaps more than all, the strange noise of the striking the fiddlesticks upon the fiddles, with which in England the musicians greet a musical celebrity, and which was still new to Weber's ears, so bewildered the poor agitated man, that he could scarcely recover his scattered senses. With difficulty was quiet restored, and the opera permitted to commence.

From the first to the last the applause was incessant and uproarious. The overture was encored. Every individual piece of music was interrupted two

or three times by the noisiest demonstrations. Huon's great air, to the composition of which Weber had lent himself so unwillingly, was redemanded, as were the ballad and romance of Fatima. A strong attempt was made, moreover, to encore the whole finale of the second act: but to such an outrage upon the dramatic proprieties of a piece Weber was never the man to give way. From first to last every thing was greeted with the noisiest favour, and—what was more unusual on the English stages of that period, when the rivalities of the two principal theatres were carried on with bitterness—without any signs of opposition. True, it must have somewhat damped the proud feelings of the composer to find that the enthusiastic applause of his audience was bestowed almost as wildly upon the scenery and show, as on his music. When the curtain fell, however, and the shouts of acclaination were subsiding, there occurred an incident, as yet unprecedented in England. The name of "Weber" was called—louder and louder still—until the whole house joined in one cry. It was, at last, understood that the public demanded the appearance of the composer on the stage. With some hesitation, the curtain was at last again raised; and Weber stood, trembling and exhausted, before the applauding crowd, which now burst into a perfect frenzy of enthusiasm. It was the first time such a demonstration had taken place in England. The newspapers almost unanimously condemned the transplantation of this continental custom to the English boards, but gave credit to Weber for the modest

manner in which he had come forward. It was looked upon as his expression of antipathy to such ovations.

In his letter to his wife, in which Weber described the scene of his success, and poured forth his gratitude for his triumph with his usual humility, piety, and affection, he added, with less of that presentiment of the coming end than he had yet evidenced, "There is much, much more, which I have to tell you; but I must reserve all this for the time, when I shall sit by your side at Hosterwitz. . . . The representations will now take place daily, if the poor singers can but hold out. I have undertaken to conduct the first twelve. I shall have enough of the opera by that time; and I shudder to think of the possibility of having it reproduced in Dresden. They cannot cast it, however—that's one comfort! and ten horses could not drag me to conduct it anywhere else." The success had evidently inspirited the poor sinking man to fresh hopes of life and reunion with his wife.

Incredible as it may appear to modern comprehensions, at a time when "Oberon" is considered to be peculiarly rich in the incessant flow of easy "catchable" melody, when it is even blamed by musical critics of the severer school for its extravagance in this respect, it was completely the reverse in England, before the commencement of the present epoch of musical cultivation. Full of praise, in some respects, as the London musical critics may have been, they almost unanimously expressed their disappointment and vexation at the want of melody, and the difficult

nature of the music in Weber's new opera. Many maintained it contained no melody whatever. Those, who admitted that this was not entirely the case, asserted that such melody, as there was, had been crushed by the exuberance of the instrumental accompaniments. Some expressed the hope that a frequent hearing of the opera might reveal beauties which had escaped the unpractised ear at first. But still the strange verdict was, in the main, the same. Public opinion could not, perhaps, have been better expressed than in the words of Klingemann: "Quiet approbation is given to 'Oberon' by the many of the enlightened who have lately begun to study and admire German music: by the masses, who were roused to enthusiasm by the more striking strains and dramatic interest of 'Der Freischütz,' it is less appreciated." Yet, during all the representations which Weber conducted, the enthusiasm was the same. Was it not chiefly due, perhaps, to the affection borne to the composer of "Der Freischütz"?

CHAPTER XIII.

THE END OF ALL.

THE more Weber was able to lay aside, one by one, as completed, the purposes of that journey which was one long struggle between life and death, the more he was possessed by one thought and feeling alone. The fainter became his hopes of ever pressing his beloved ones to his heart again, the more incessant and torturing became the yearning for his home. Could he at least but die there! Every step upon his thorny path was taken with this one faint hope.

On the morning after the first representation of "Oberon," Weber lay exhausted in his easy-chair, when Fürstenau entered his room with a new potion. "Go! go!" murmured the sufferer; "no doctor's tinkering can help me now. The machine is shattered. But ah! would but God, in His mercy, grant that it might hold together till I could embrace my Lina and my boys once more!" This feeling, over which long hours of sleeplessness and solitude permitted him to brood incessantly, even broke forth now involuntarily in his letters to his wife. She had told him

that his children asked why papa remained so long away. Tears are in his simple answer: "Yes, the father is long, long away; ah! and how long is the time to *him!* how every day is counted!" Every stipulated representation of his "Oberon" under his own conductorship was indeed counted off with trembling hand. "To-day is a day enough to kill one," he wrote on the 18th April,—"a thick, dark, dank, yellow fog. It is almost impossible to see without candles. The sun has no rays; it is only a red patch amidst the fog. It is awful. My yearning for Hosterwitz and a bright sky is indescribable. Patience! patience! Day crawls away after day." "God bless you, my deeply beloved ones!" he wrote once more. "I count days, hours, minutes, until we meet again. We have often been parted before, and loved each other dearly, God knows. But this terrible yearning I have never known before. God grant me patience!" Thus was letter after letter filled. But even with these fearfully oppressive feelings gnawing at his heart, the fond husband still strove to reassure the anxious one at home. "Now, my dear good little old woman," ran a passage in another letter, "in thus opening my heart to you, I rely in confidence on your good sense not to seek fresh stuff for sorrow and alarm out of what I babble, but only to pity the lot of man, truly born to suffer." Sometimes his soothing words look almost as though they were genuine cheering rays of hope sunning his own heart. In a later letter he describes all his symptoms, and then adds: "You see I don't give a pretty picture of myself; but you may

all the more believe me when I say, you may be wholly easy about me." Hard indeed must it have been for a man with this world of love within his heart to accept the thought that he was for ever parted from those he loved so fondly.

The tokens of admiration and regard which were still showered meanwhile by the English people upon the great composer, little as he might feel them now, and were evidenced by the same extraordinary homage on all the nights on which he himself conducted his new opera, took a remarkable form on an occasion, brought about by his very opponents. A portion of the English musical world, which considered itself the national party, and was in some respects supported by the aristocracy, had used great efforts to set up Bishop, as their own national celebrity, against the great foreign master. Bishop was a composer of talent and great repute, and fully entitled to the esteem of his own countrymen, much as there was to blame in his wretched misdealings with "Der Freischütz" and other foreign operas. His last operatic composition, "Aladdin," was now brought out at Drury Lane Theatre with immense pomp and splendour, and with the avowed intention of throwing Weber's "Oberon" into the shade, and turning away the national enthusiasm from the stranger to the nation's child. Weber was present on the occasion of the first representation of this opera. "Yesterday was a most interesting day to me," he wrote. "It was that of the production of my so-called rival's opera 'Aladdin.' Places were difficult to obtain.

But a proprietor kindly offered me his box. . . Scarce had I entered the box, when the whole house rose and greeted me with the greatest enthusiasm. This, in a strange theatre, and on such a day, gave me the truest evidence of the nation's love, and affected me more than all. . . . The opera itself—well, it lasted four hours and a half—enough to give the best-disposed a surfeit of all operas. The applause at first was great . . . but it gradually dwindled away. . . A very pretty hunting-chorus was actually hissed; and in the pit they began whistling that from 'Der Freischütz.' . . . Bishop was not called; and the opera may be considered a failure. . . . The story, however, was very badly treated, and was full of long uninteresting scenes."

Neither his state of suffering or his deep depression could prevent Weber from still giving all his remaining energies to those to whom he was sincerely attached. He was again to be seen conducting at the concert of Miss Hawes, the daughter of his friend Hawes the music-publisher. At the benefits of Charles Kemble and Miss Paton he again gave his services, although shivering with fever, and with death-throes already at his heart. For Braham's benefit he again conducted his overture, "The Ruler of the Spirits," although terrified by the tumult around him. On this occasion the great artist, who had till then only witnessed scenes of enthusiasm and homage, was doomed to make a sad experience of the coarseness of a London mob, as it sometimes evidenced itself at that period. Braham was a popular favour-

ite; the house was overcrammed. Whether from this cause, or some other unknown reason, a state of confusion, almost of riot, prevailed during the whole evening. The galleries yelled, screamed, hooted, without cessation. Weber appeared unwelcomed; not a note of his overture was heard; not a hand applauded. Miss Paton's great air was received, the mobocracy alone knew why, with yells of laughter. The lady struggled in vain to make herself heard, and at last fainted. The galleries only yelled all the more; and when a voice was heard, it was in thundering a coarse joke. "Is it possible? is it possible?" sobbed Weber, as he drove from this scene of tumult to his home, crouched with his head between his hands.

It was not yet the last. Poor Weber's flickering genius had again to be summoned from its rest for more and still more exertions. The celebrated composer had been invited to the annual festival of the Royal Society of Musicians. It had been the invariable custom for the guests honoured on this occasion to compose a festive march. Haydn, Winter, Spohr, had all given way to the established practice; and Weber did not wish to be left behind. But how was his genius to serve him in his condition of pain and fearful prostration? As he lay sleepless in his bed, on the night of the 5th May, he suddenly called to mind the theme of a march he had composed in years long gone by for his "Six pièces à quatre mains." It was forgotten, and unknown in England. From this thought sprang the magnificent march known as Op. 8 of his posthumous works.

But his feeble hands could no longer score the work. He commenced; and power failed him. He lay, almost already a corpse, in his arm-chair, and dictated to the kindly Fürstenau the second and third parts of the march, with all their instrumentation. The march was performed, along with his overture, "The Ruler of the Spirits," at the festal anniversary, on the 13th May, and called forth the greatest acknowledgment of respect and admiration from the talented musicians, to whom it was dedicated. Weber himself was, after all, unable to be present.

It was with a heavy heart that the suffering man now proceeded to play out his last trump-card, upon which his greatest hopes were fixed. He began his preparations for his concert. Should this last corner-stone of the edifice of hope, which he had fondly built on the apparently solid foundation of rich remunerative gains in London, only fall upon the other ruins, his last little store of life, he deemed, would have been sacrificed in vain. He could not, however, believe that his good genius could so far desert him. His hopes were greatly fortified by the offer of Miss Stephens, of whose talent Weber was a great admirer, to appear at his concert. The celebrated artist, however, was desirous of singing some new composition by the master; and Weber, exhausted as he was, could not gainsay her wish. Miss Stephens herself chose the words from Moore's "Lalla Rookh;" and the composer set himself to work on "From Chindara's warbling fount I come." But fearfully painful was the effort now. Twice Weber flung down

his pen in utter despair. At last, on the morning of the 18th May, the great artist's flitting genius came back to him, and for the last time gave him a farewell kiss upon that noble forehead now bedewed with the cold sweat of death—for the last time! The trembling hands were unable to write down more than the notes for the voice. Weber rehearsed his last composition with the celebrated artist from this sketch, and accompanied the song from memory at his concert.*

Weber had actually had the courage also to arrange his jubilee cantata for this concert to English words. It now received the title of "The Festival of Peace." Madame Caradori-Allan, Miss H. Cawse, Braham, and Phillips were engaged for the solo voices. True to the last to his careful study of all works, even when not his own, Weber sat during the rehearsals in a great chair, scarcely able to speak above a faint whisper. For the last time he raised that voice, which in days gone by had thundered out his commands, firmly to address the chorus. In good English fashion it was singing the great prayer of the cantata with full voice. "Stop! stop!" he cried; "that's not it! Would you think of roaring so in the presence of the Almighty?" Miss Paton, the tenor Sapio, and all the most distinguished instrumentalists of the day, had offered their services on the occasion of this concert; and all the preparations were made by his friends Hawes, Moscheles, Fürstenau, Fawcett, and Sir George Smart. But still this concert was a

* This song was afterwards admirably completed by Moscheles.

constant spectre in his path. "That hard trial, my concert, still lies before me," he wrote to his wife. "I am good for nothing for such matters now. Who will help me? To be sure, all do—and yet—well it must be gone through—and then—never more." "This day week is my concert," he wrote again on the 19th May. "How my poor heart beats when I think of it! What will be the result? The last chances left me are this concert and my benefit. When I think on all they cost me, should they not turn out so as to meet my modest expectations, it were hard indeed. But I must not let my courage fail me. I will rely on Him who has already been so infinitely merciful to us. You will think, my beloved life, that I lay far too much stress on all this. But remember that my hope of fortune for us was the only purpose of this weary journey. Can you not comprehend, then, why I now hold for so important that which has always played but a subordinate part in my life? . . . Pray, dearest, pray that poor old papa's wishes, which are all for your dear sakes, may yet be fulfilled." How bitterly were all these hopes destined to be crushed at last!

On the 26th May, the day for which Weber's concert was fixed, took place Epsom races; in the afternoon Begrez, the singer, gave his own concert in the house of the Duke of St. Albans, at which all the high society of London was present; torrents of rain poured down from heaven; and, a direr mischance than all—the Lady Patronesses of "The Philarmonic Society," whose influence the dying man had been

unable personally to seek, moved not one finger to give an air of fashion to the occasion. The concert-hall in the Argyle Rooms was almost empty. Weber's friends, who knew what store the poor man set by the success of his concert, were terrified, and awaited his entrance with the greatest anxiety. At last Weber tottered in, supported by Sir George Smart. He looked around; a bitter painful smile distorted those features, usually so placid in the midst of every suffering. What comfort could the excellent performance of his "Festival of Peace," of his overtures to "Oberon" and "Euryanthe" yield him now? What the admirable exertions of Braham, Sapio, and Phillips; of Miss Paton, who sung his air to "Atalia" with so much artistic power; of Miss Stephens, who warbled his last song to the words of Moore? This, his last composition, was accompanied by the trembling hands of the master himself. These tones were the last he ever produced. That hand of wondrous harmony never touched the keys of instrument again. The enthusiastic applause of the scanty assembly failed now to cheer the heart of the dying man. After the last note of the overture to "Euryanthe," Fürstenau led him from the room. He fell upon a sofa in an utterly shattered state, almost breathless, and in despair. Friends, musicians, artists surrounded him: but he gave little heed. He only murmured with faint voice, "What do you say to that? That is Weber in London!" His once strong hopeful heart was broken. He suffered in silence, but he suffered bitterly.

The following day, Weber was somewhat better. He was still supported by the hopes of his benefit: he still found strength sufficient to write to his wife in such wise as to place in its least painful light his cruel disappointment. As yet, in spite of his bodily weakness, his hand-writing had remained distinct and clear. In this letter it displays the utter ruin of his strength. "Writing is somewhat painful to me," runs one phrase of it; "my hands tremble so." Fürstenau saw only too clearly the sinking state of the poor man, and generously offered to give up his own concert in order to hasten the departure of his friend. "What a word of comfort you have spoken!" gasped Weber, clutching the hand of the kind fellow. He wrote again to his wife, with a last gleam of his old spirit: "You will not have many more letters from me: and so receive now my high and mighty commands. Do not answer this to London, but to the *poste restante*, Frankfurt. You are astounded! Well! I am not coming home through Paris. What should I do there? I cannot walk—I cannot speak. I will have nothing more to do with business for years to come. So it is far better I should take the straight way home by Calais, through Brussels, Cologne, Coblentz, and thus by the Rhine to Frankfurt. What a charming journey! I must travel very slowly, however, and probably rest for half a day, now and then. I shall gain a good fortnight thus; and by the end of June I hope to be in your arms." At this time he was still resolved to keep his promise of conducting at Miss Paton's concert. But he came home in a

state of such feverish agitation and complete exhaustion, that his friends came around him, and wrung from him the promise that he would conduct no more, and even give up his own benefit. This resolution, strange to say, appeared to bestow fresh spirits on him: it enabled him to hasten his return. Now that all last earthly interests were laid aside, love and affection for the dear ones at home had alone possession of his mind. One thought alone occupied his whole soul—to be at home again amongst his own—to see them, if but once—but once! With this feeling, in which gleamed one last ray of cheerfulness, he wrote: "How will you receive me? In heaven's name, alone. Let no one disturb my joy of looking again upon my wife, my children, my dearest and my best . . . Thank God! the end of all is fast approaching . . ." The end of all *was* fast approaching.

On the 1st of June, every painful symptom of the poor sufferer had so increased, that his friends held counsel with Doctor Kind, who considered his state highly precarious. Fürstenau was desirous of watching by his bedside. "No, no," replied Weber, "I am not near so ill as you want to make me out." He refused even the attendance of Sir George Smart's servant in his anteroom. Blisters were applied to his chest; and he noted in his diary, "Thank God, my sleep was sweet!" He fixed his departure for the 6th, arranged all his pecuniary affairs with minuteness, and employed his friends in purchasing presents for his family and friends in Dresden. He was strongly urged to postpone his journey until he could

have recovered some degree of strength. But this solicitation only irritated him. "I must go back to my own—I must!" he sobbed incessantly. "Let me see them once more—and then God's will be done!" The attempt appeared impossible to all. With great unwillingness he yielded to his friends' request to have a consultation of physicians. "Be it so!" he answered. "But come of it what may, I go!" His only thought—his only word was, "Home!" On the 2d of June he wrote his last letter to his beloved wife —the last lines his hand ever traced. "What a joy, my own dear darling, your letter gave me! What a happiness to me to know that you are well! . . . As this letter requires no answer, it will be but a short one. What a comfort it is not to have to answer. . . . God bless you all, and keep you well! Oh! were I but amongst you all again! I kiss you with all my heart and soul, my dearest one! Preserve all your love for me, and think with pleasure on him who loves thee above all, thy Karl." What an outpouring of the truest affection there was in that last loving prayer!

Weber's only thoughts were now concentrated on his journey; and he even reproached Fürstenau with caballing with the others to prevent his undertaking it. "You may do what you will, it is of no avail," he said. On the evening of the 3d of June he asked his friend Göschen, with a smile, "Have you any thing to say to your father? At all events, I shall tell him that his son has been a dear kind friend to me in London." "But you leave many friends and admirers here," said Göschen. "Hush! hush!" replied

Weber, still smiling softly; "that's not the same thing, you know." When, on the evening of the 4th, he sat panting in his easy-chair, with Sir George Smart, Göschen, Fürstenau, and Moscheles grouped around him, he could speak only of his journey. At ten o'clock, they urged him to retire to bed. But he firmly declined to have any one watch by his bed-side, and even to forego his custom of baring his chamber-door. When he had given his white, transparent, trembling hand to all, murmuring gently, but in soft earnest tones, the words, "God reward you all for your kind love to me!" he was led by Sir George Smart and Fürstenau into his bedroom. Fürstenau, from whom alone he would accept such services, helped him to undress: the effort was a painful one to himself. With his own hand, however, Weber wound-up his watch, with his usual punctilious care; then, with all that charm of amiability, for which he was conspicuous through life, he murmured his thanks to his friend, and said, "Now let me sleep." These were the last words that mortal ear heard the great artist utter. It is clear, however, that Weber must have left his bed later; for, the next morning, the door, through which Fürstenau had passed, was barred. For a long time the friends sat together in Sir George Smart's room, filled with sorrowful presentiments, and earnestly consulting what means might best be taken to prevent the journey. About midnight they went asunder. On their leaving the house all was dark in Weber's window. His light had been extinguished.

The next morning, at the early hour when Weber generally required his aid, Sir George Smart's servant knocked at his chamber-door; no answer came: he knocked again, and louder. It was strange; for Weber's sleep had been always light. The alarmed servant rushed to Sir George, who sprang out of bed, and hurried to the room. Still, to his repeated knocking, no answer was returned. Fürstenau was sent for. He came half-dressed, already anticipating the worst. It was now resolved to force the door. It was burst open. All was still within. The watch, which the last movement of the great hand which had written "Freischütz," "Euryanthe," and "Oberon," had wound up, alone ticked with painful distinctness. The bed-curtains were torn back. There lay the beloved friend and master dead. His head rested on his left hand, as if in tranquil sleep—not the slightest trace of pain or suffering on his noble features. The soul, yearning for the dear objects of its love, had burst its earthly covering and fled. The immortal master was not dead—he had gone home.

Sir George Smart and Fürstenau, as they stood horror-struck by the deathbed side, could not believe that Weber was no more. A medical man was summoned in hot haste to open a vein. With breathless anxiety the friends looked into his face as he raised the lifeless hand; and when he let it fall, with the words, "It is all useless; the man has been dead these five or six hours," they first knew that all indeed was over! Moscheles now was sent for; his presence was desirable, for the steps necessary to be

taken. But, for a time, there was no thought but of tears for him who lay sleeping there so peacefully, so pleasantly. At last the dead man's papers and other effects were put under seal. It was strange to find how every thing had been arranged with most scrupulous care, as if with a presentiment of the coming end—the list of the linen which had been sent to the wash—the money intended for Sir George Smart's servants, in packets, carefully sealed and ticketed. The post-mortem examination took place the same afternoon. Two evils existed, one of which would have in itself sufficed to produce death; and with either of which it was astonishing that the sufferer should have breathed so long,—an ulcer on the windpipe, and tubercles on the lungs. The body, worn to a skeleton, was embalmed and deposited in the leaden coffin in which it still rests. On the following day Sir George Smart, Fürstenau, and Moscheles proceeded to arrange the affairs of the deceased. It appeared that the profits he had derived in London, first and last, amounted to the sum of 1097*l.* 6*s.*, of which 752*l.* 17*s.* were found in hand, the remainder having already been sent off to Dresden, or spent during the stay in London.

The news of Weber's death spread over all London like wildfire, and excited a profound sensation of the deepest regret and sympathy throughout all classes of the mighty metropolis. All antipathies, all feelings of petty rivalry were silenced in face of the majesty of death. In all the organs of the public press, without exception, appeared notices, in which

the tribute paid to the richly-deserved fame of the great artist was mingled with a sentiment of national pride, that it should have been for England that his last great work had been created—that in England it should have been given amidst demonstrations of enthusiasm, such as in no portion of the world could have been surpassed. True! the rumours of the war in Greece, only a few days after Weber's death, effaced the remembrance of his exquisite melodies, and directed the curiosity of the novelty-loving metropolis to stirring scenes of life, far more speedily than would otherwise have been the case. Not but the most honourable demonstrations were made by all the musical institutes of London. Even the aristocratic "Philharmonic Concerts" opened their next evening with the Dead March in Saul, "as a tribute to departed genius." With a still more noble and delicate sentiment was the theatre of Drury Lane, hitherto animated by a feeling of rivalry, closed on the evening when a benefit for Weber's family was given, on the 17th of June, at Covent Garden, so as not to diminish the receipts: by that one act the management respected the husband and father, as much as it honoured the great artist. Charles Kemble had been absolved, by Weber's death, from his obligation to give up a night to this benefit. But the worthy and generous man, who had throughout shown himself the true friend of Weber, scorned to take this advantage. Unfortunately the noble action was far from bringing the advantages expected. All at once, every sympathy for Weber seemed to have

sunk out in darkness. Not one of all the great or wealthy—not one of those around whom the last flashes of his genius had flickered—not one of all who had proffered him homage, brought his mite of charity to the treasury of the theatre. Least of all did Weber's own countrymen offer even a small tribute to his fame. During his whole sojourn in London, instead of basking in the reflected rays of that fame which glorified the Fatherland, they had held back in coldness from the man, who was not smiled upon by their patrons, the aristocracy. As in life, so in death. Scarcely one single German was to be seen in Covent Garden on that unhappy benefit-night of the 17th of June. A benefit for the widow and orphans of the Genius! Why, the receipts barely covered the expenses of the night!

But Weber's friends, meanwhile, had taken thought to have the last offices performed to his remains in such wise as not to diminish his scanty gains. Combined with all the most influential musical men in London, they formed a committee, and opened a subscription for the purpose of paying due honour to the deceased monarch of art, by a funeral worthy of the English nation. The musical periodicals called loudly for a general subscription. It was intended that the ceremony should take place with pomp in the Roman Catholic chapel of St. Mary, Moorfields, and that Mozart's Requiem should be performed on the occasion in the grandest style; a high price was to be fixed for the entrance-tickets; and from the proceeds a monument was to be erected

to the memory of the great German composer. The more important portion of this project was rendered impossible, however, by the nature of the rights of property in the "sittings" of the chapel. Under these circumstances, the committee had actually the boldness to petition the Dean of Westminster to allow Weber's funeral ceremony to take place in the Abbey. The answer was a courteous one; but at the same time, exactly what might have been foreseen. It would be against all the principles and feelings of the Church to permit a Roman Catholic religious ceremony within the Abbey walls. The idea of the performance of Mozart's Requiem in the Moorfields Chapel was then resumed. But it was necessary to renounce all hopes of obtaining funds for the erection of the proposed monument. That honour was reserved at last for the composer's own native country.

No sooner was the intention of giving a great musical ceremony on the occasion of Weber's funeral generally known, than the committee found itself stormed, in a manner as eager as it was touching, by all the musical celebrities of the day, who desired to show their respect and honour of the deceased, by taking a part in the sad work. The very first of all who strode forward with his offers of service was the inimitable prince of song, Lablache. Miss Stephens, Miss Paton—all, in short, who had any name or fame in the musical world, pressed forward eagerly. The orchestra and choruses of Covent Garden, Drury Lane, and the Philharmonic Society solicited the

honour of being ranked among those who were to be employed. So numerous were the names inscribed, that, considering the comparatively confined space of the chapel, not more than a third could be selected. And the choice was difficult.

Early in the morning of the 21st of June the long funeral procession left the house of Sir George Smart in Great Portland Street, in all the almost mediæval pomp of such ceremonies at that period. Crowds thronged the streets through which the hearse and a long line of mourning carriages wound their slow and weary way to the far-distant chapel of Moorfields. Long before they reached the place of worship, the building, hung with black, and blazing with wax-lights, was filled by a crowd of some two thousand persons. As the body was received at the entrance by the priests, the imposing tones of Mozart's splendid Requiem burst out; and over the sleeping form of the great composer were poured forth the strains of the illustrious master *he* had most reverenced and loved. The deepest emotion was on every face. The singers trembled as they sang. As the heavenly tones of the "Salve me sors pietatis" rolled along the chapel, there could have been few who did not feel that he who slumbered there on that catafalk need not have feared the judgment of his Maker any more than the judgment of mankind. The last notes of the Requiem had melted away: to the solemn strains of the "Dead March in Saul" the coffin had been lowered into the vault; the lights were extinguished one by one: then silence and peace were

around the dead; and there, far from home and love, and all that his warm noble heart most prized in life, rested the body of Carl Maria von Weber.

Meanwhile, Fürstenau's terrible letter was on its way to Dresden. It was the death-warrant of the purest wedded bliss that had ever made two mortals happy; it was nigh a fatal cup of poison to one of the noblest hearts of womankind: it told two little blooming boys that they were orphaned. No wonder that Fürstenau had not the courage to address Caroline von Weber herself: his letter had been sent to her dearest friend, Fräulein von Hanmann. The sad messenger of death went down to Hosterwitz, the letter in her hand. But she, too, had not the courage to break the fearful news to the impulsive woman, unaided and alone. She stopped her carriage at a little distance from the house, to beg the support of Roth, who lived close by. But Caroline had heard the carriage-wheels—had looked out—had seen her friend descend on that unaccustomed spot, and disappear into Roth's house. A fearful presentiment seized her—she rushed towards the spot—she saw the two standing in the little garden wringing their hands and weeping—she knew all—and she lay senseless at their feet. Her little boy Max had followed her in childish alarm. Nigh forty years have gone by since then; but he has never forgotten the sound of that terrible cry, when his mother, slowly recovering from her swoon, clasped him convulsively in her arms, and wetted his face with a flood of tears.

Years passed away. But it seemed as if that yearning for home, which had been the last feeling in Weber's heart, had not died out with the death of his mortal portion. It continued to haunt the hearts of those he had so fondly loved like a restless ghost, whose day of delivery from the earth had not yet come. It was always there, prompting the return of those cold ashes to that home, the living man could see no more, to rest among his own. The time arrived at last. In the year 1841, fifteen years after Weber's death, a stir began to be made. An article in the *Europa* made a fiery appeal for the restitution of the remains of the German singer to his own native German soil. Other papers responded to the call. At last, a practical step was made by opening a public subscription for the translation of Weber's body to Dresden. Other friends followed in the same direction. Concerts were given to assist the subscription. Committees were appointed. But still little progress was made. At length, in the year 1844, very mainly by the energy of Richard Wagner the composer, then capellmeister in Dresden, and a tried friend of the widow and orphans of the artist he had looked up to and reverenced, renewed steps were taken. Weber's elder son, Max, was in London, occupied with his studies. He was placed in active communication with the Prussian Consulate. With the assistance of several friends, among whom Julius Benedict, Weber's favourite pupil, then resident in London, was most conspicuous, he was enabled to prosecute the necessary measures to such good pur-

pose, that all was arranged for the translation of the revered remains.

Weber's corpse, however, was not to be the first deposited in the family vault. Alexander von Weber, younger son of the composer, was suddenly called away from life; and the widowed mother was destined to follow the young man, so full of hope and promise, to the grave, before she wept over his father's ashes, a short fortnight later.

On the 20th of October 1844, Weber's coffin was landed in Hamburg. There all honour was paid to the remains of the great German master; and, amidst the sounds of Beethoven's funeral march, and the thunder of cannon, with the flags of all the ships of every nation lowered around, the body was transferred to the smaller vessel, which was to bear it up the Elbe to Dresden. On the 14th of December—a delay having been occasioned by a sharp frost upon the river—it reached its destination. It was the dusk of evening when the coffin was conveyed, through countless masses of human beings, who, in solemn silence, lined the streets from the black-draped quay to the Catholic cemetery in Friedrichsstadt, and amidst an interminable line of flaring torches, which dimly showed the black banner, on which were inscribed the words, "Weber in Dresden!" Yes! Weber's last wish had been fulfilled; and he was again to be at home. His now only son, and all the musical corps of every institute in Dresden followed, with an endless mass of friends. In the richly decorated chapel of the cemetery, all the ladies of the theatre, with Schröder-De-

vrient at their head, awaited the body, and covered the coffin with laurels. The ceremony was at an end. The torches were extinguished; the crowd dispersed. But, by the light of two candles still burning on the altar, might be seen the form of a small now middle-aged woman, who had flung herself upon the bier, whilst a pale young man knelt praying by her side.

The following day Weber's body was conveyed to the family vault amidst crowds of spectators, even more numerous than on the day before. A funeral march, which Weber himself had composed in early youth, at Breslau, accompanied him to his last resting-place. Richard Wagner and Theodor Hell spoke over his grave. Then, amidst a solemn strain, composed expressly for the occasion by Wagner, roses and laurels were thrown into the depths; and now, indeed, by the side of his youngest born, Carl Maria von Weber was at last at home.

Again years were to pass away. But there was still another ceremony to come in honour of the great composer. As early as the year 1844 measures were commenced to be taken for the erection of a national monument in honour of one of Germany's greatest artists. Subscriptions were again opened, and representations were given at the principal German theatres for this national purpose. But subscriptions came in slowly. That collected by Benedict in England was the most considerable. During the revolutionary year of 1848 all was in abeyance. Richard Wagner, who had taken the matter most strongly to

heart, was obliged to fly his country on account of his political opinions. But in 1851 the memorial committee again made a powerful appeal to the country; once more in 1856. But from all the sources flowed far too feeble a sum to enable the project to be put into execution. Slowly, through the efforts of the best artists of the time, such as Madame Schröder-Devrient, Madame Jenny Ney, and Davison the actor, who took up the cause with zeal, a sufficient sum was scantily brought together. It seems almost incredible, that, amidst a population of forty-two million Germans, to say nothing of some three hundred European theatres, which had all, more or less, derived much profit from his creations, no more should have been raised for a monument in honour of Germany's most popular composer than from eight to nine thousand thalers.

A statue was made by the able hand of Rietschel It was inaugurated on the 11th of October 1860, with much municipal and artistic pomp and ceremony, in presence of the royal family and diplomatic corps, with all the remaining members of the Weber family grouped around. The widow had not lived to see this solemn homage to the husband of her pride and love. The statue stands upon the open space before the theatre in Dresden. The last homage was thus paid to the artist of the honest mind, who had suffered and achieved so much.

Thus ends the story of the life of one who had caused hearts to beat in sympathy from pole to pole.

It has shown the influence of the world without upon the workings of the genius within. As child, his spirit already rose above the reckless inspirations of the wild stroller's life around him. As youth, he struggled against impressions still more harmful, nigh beaten sometimes, but still rescuing his genius from the slough into which evil example might have plunged it, with the longing always at his heart for home, domestic hearth, and pure true love. As master, he trod on his conscientious course in duty to himself and to his art, unheeding the allurements of false fame, fighting against painful humiliations, a martyr for the true cause. In the hearts of the people he found his truest acknowledgment; and German feeling and Weber's songs are now bound in indissoluble bonds together. But the martyrdom ends; and the poor martyr finds his rest in death. To the last his unfailing devise in all had been,

"BE IT AS GOD WILL!"

THE END.

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